





















**THE LETTERS OF  
SIR WALTER RALEIGH  
(1879-1922)**







SIR WALTER RALEIGH,  
TAKEN AT BURFORD PRIORY

**THE · LETTERS OF  
SIR WALTER RALEIGH  
(1879–1922)**

**EDITED BY  
LADY RALEIGH**

**WITH A PREFACE BY  
DAVID NICHOL SMITH**

GOLDSMITHS' READER IN ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS**

**VOLUME II**



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**THE LETTERS OF  
SIR WALTER RALEIGH  
(1879-1922)**

•

**VOLUME II**



# THE LETTERS OF WALTER RALEIGH

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

12 Northmoor Road, Oxford,  
30-iv-05.

I was back at Oxford at seven o'clock that same day. I am drawing up a liturgy for use after a visit.

For all the pleasures of my visit I beg you to accept my thanks.

For the shelter of Dalnotter, for the room in the Permanent Residents' Wing, for the fire of an evening and the tea of a morning, I beg you to accept my thanks.

For the services of Plantagenet and the labours of the staff, I beg, &c.

For all the viands of the Table, for the Five Meals and Fifty Dishes, for the fishes and birds and beasts but especially\* (for the Crab) I beg you to accept my thanks.

\* (Here shall be inserted the name of any dish which it is desired to commemorate.)

For the beautiful days at Erskine, for the games of golf, for the good strokes of my partners and for the bad strokes of my enemies, I beg you to accept my thanks.

For the noble company of my fellow guests, for the Edinburgh Professor and the Brown Immortelle,

for the Lawyer and the Publisher, for the wise man with the two-eared bag and for the man in the mutton coloured suit, for my supplanter and his helpmete, for the discreet Rose and spirited Carolina and for the man Robert, I beg you to accept my thanks.

For all drinks and potions, for the tea and the coffee, the claret and the sherry, for the fifty-one port and the eighty-seven port, for the whisky and the very old brandy, I beg you to accept my thanks.

(Here shall be inserted the Collect for use after Bridge.)

For all my quarrels at Bridge, for my failures to make myself socially useful, for putting J. M. in a swither, for reprehending R. L., and for all ridiculous and offensive behaviour, I humbly beg your pardon.

(Here shall be inserted the prayer to be said by those who desire to be asked again.)

You can't tell how much better I am than when I started. The house is bare-boarded and chaotic, but it is improving. Lucie is going to write to you. She says I have been spoiled and she must write all about it.

## TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Magdalen College, Oxford,*  
May 4, 1905.

It is difficult to promise an Introduction<sup>1</sup> to a book I have never seen. But I won't insist on that, for I am quietly wilting under the shadow of the jobs I have to do, and I can't take on a new one. If I were in Liverpool, and we had discussed the thing together, it would be different, I

<sup>1</sup> His essay on Blake prefixed to the small edition of "the Lyrical Poems of William Blake" in the *Oxford Miscellany Series*. This essay is reprinted in *Some Authors*.

know, and I should probably manage to squeeze an introduction out of myself. But things being as they are makes other things, which would have been different otherwise, different from what they would have been. It's Fate, I suppose. When you shift your baggage you shift likewise your power of casual usefulness and incidental larks, which don't flourish much here in Maudlin College, though otherwise excellent, and pleasant for the middle-aged. I have just come from lecturing on English Composition, so I am tired, and don't know how to put it clearer. Will you explain to the Secretary, and put my apology into language which he, or she, will understand, with every form of courtesy, and regrets.

. . . In the matter of the Daughter. I call it lucky for her to be younger than her brothers. Gals dragoon younger boys, but boys sometimes, and at some ages (though by no means at all, as Saintsbury would say) see that younger gals has a good time.

#### TO D. S. MACCOLL

*Oxford, 24-v-05.*

I wish that "Battersea Bridge"<sup>1</sup> could stay in this country if only to diddle the Americans. I have asked Lucie to tout among her acquaintance. Oxford is a poor field—endless middle-class incomes, and pseudo-art-culture.

It's an odd thing about London, the utter lack of capitalists for schemes like this. They are there, but no one gets at them, because in London there is no real society, only caves and ladders and treadmills. The provinces are much easier to work.

I have never felt even faintly inclined to help to buy pictures for the nation. It seems a ridiculous sort of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. MacColl had asked him to help with a subscription to buy Whistler's "Battersea Bridge," now in the Tate Gallery.

pluralism. I haven't a decent water colour, even, of my own. Plenty of money is spent, but it is spent wrong. So when the rich have bought the bad thing, are we to give them the good thing free? It's terribly wasteful. A little evangelisation would raise thousands instead of guineas. So if I come across a chance I will tout, but I won't subscribe. Artists' widows appeal to me. Not their pictures—for the pictures are there, safe enough, and to influence their disposal one has to swim in currents where I should drown.

I haven't much hope of the culture devotees. You have to frighten them to get their money.

TO D. S. MACCOLL

*Oxford, 27 May, 1905.*

Just for fun, find me the sophistry here. I don't, for myself, want pictures in galleries. The galleries falsify them; and my temper, in a bleak public institution, falsifies them still more. Anyhow, I don't want them; and hardly ever go there. Remains the rest of the nation. The best evidence that the nation wants a picture is that it will pay for it. And so it will, and no trouble, if enough people want it. So my help is not needed.

But the case of the Whistler, and most other good pictures, is not this. The Whistler is wanted (in a gallery) by a few, mostly poor. It is a luxury, I take it. We all pay, or help to pay, for luxuries. But very few of us (and those very queer) help to pay for luxuries that we don't like. And I don't like public galleries. They are not live things. Commission a good man to do the inside of a music-hall or public-house within reach of me, and I'll subscribe.

I can't see the flaw here. Insensibility, if you like, but O, not sophistry! It would be violent sophistry in me to pretend to care twopence about what is called the "public taste" so far as it is influenced by galleries. Horrid brick

houses are going up all 'round me. They are there, in my eyes, while I write. I don't see how I am to get at them—not by a guinea to help forward the day of a little more cultured talk by trippers from the outskirts. The 'bus, the Corot, and the bun-shop is not a civilisation.

So it would be a "wicked guinea"—as Thoreau, the Puritan, remarked of his subscriptions to philanthropy. Most of my lecturing is (alas !) contributed to this useless, foolish end of public culture. If I sent good money after bad I might as well be John Ruskin His Zany. Come now—An artist's widow—for piety ; or a leg up for a swell who wants to do something—for faith. But no galleries !

It is really a very strange and queer thing, and puzzles me daily—the impossibility, as it seems, of getting within reach of the work of the world. North Oxford, as I daresay you know, belongs to St. John's College mostly. Well, one strong man as Bursar, could, if he knew about building, and cared for it, have made a beautiful city, instead of this abomination. But it never happens. The art-lover never gets hold of the tiller. He is engaged in loving. I feel as if we were all dupes and fools, allowed to amuse ourselves by furthering art and taste while our masters get ready to spit us and roast us. *They* will subscribe guineas, and glad to do it—it keeps us quiet. And we are all eminent and influential—they don't mind, so long as we are kept out of the engine-room, and have beautiful little toy engines to play with in the saloon.

I will subscribe to make Augustus John Director of a Public House Trust. Or Charles Conder Lessee of an Opera House. These men are still within our reach.

TO GEORGE RATHBONE

*Oxford, 24-6-05.*

I have been amusing myself with balancing the oil business.



*Quoth the Devil of Prudence :—*

Ten wells have been sunk, of which two produce marketable oil.

666 acres are yet to be purchased.

The oil, allowing for cartage, is worth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  dollars a barrel at the railway.

£8,800 have been spent in seven months.

£6,000 more is asked for.

The Directors have not decided what to do.

Mr. Hilliard is ill.

The output of the wells has not been determined.

An oil expert reports very favourably on the property of a neighbouring company.

*Quoth the Angel of Enterprise :*

Nothing venture, nothing have.

Oil's oil, any day.

Don't desert your employés, and leave them struggling 1500 feet down in water, sand and oil.

Children and fools should not see half-finished work.

Double the risk, and double the profit.

A few more years shall roll, etc.

This concludes the remarks of the Angel.

I think I am on the side of the Angel. So unless some reliable tipster urges me to hedge by backing the Devil this time, I shall lend the Angel a few more golden feathers.

We hope you are all very well. It looks as if we are going to have a summer—the first since 1900.

TO GEORGE RATHBONE

*Oxford, 30-vi-05.*

Many thanks. I wasn't squeaking; and if Wyoming perishes in an earthquake to-morrow, or if all the oil there goes sour in a thunderstorm, or is tapped by dishonest agents, I shall have nothing but thanks for you. So don't you worry, as if I was a widow or a clergyman. I shall

offer the oilman a further small accommodation to do what he likes with.

I was sorry you had the bother of writing, for really I like the gamble, and it is amusing while it lasts, and no harm will be done, anyhow, for the Scot in me will stop long before the end of the tether, and will take to prudent ways and a stocking again. And *if* profit comes, anyhow I won't found Libraries, like Carnegie. That's always something.

TO D. NICHOL SMITH

12 Northmoor Rd. Oxford,

3-7-05.

I stayed with Churton Collins at Birmingham, and liked it. He was very humane, and curiously modest concerning Universities and the way to work them. His pen is quite immodest, because he has remained a school-boy, and writes clever or scathing "themes," which do not express himself or anything else. I don't think it has ever occurred to him that you can express your vaguer thoughts in writing. He spoke to me with contempt of someone (Bradley, I think) who says things, in a printed book, which are really only fit to say in free conversation. It is a drill sergeant's idea of literature, with Macaulay for the Great Dook. Macaulay—God's Ape—he stinks in my nostrils. Cheap, vain, poor, noisy, blind.

When Churton wrote to me first, he plainly disliked the idea of me. We had never met. But he asked me to stay, and thawed. He has had a hard life, because the people who read are profounder readers than he is a writer. He hammers away at his exercise; and they think it's all real.

We have handed over Uffington to the Medleys, and are to pack off to a cottage in the New Forest about July 27.

To C. H. FIRTH

24.vii.05.

Nowell Smith is doing Sir P. Sidney—ripping well. It's a shame he's going to Winchester. We want that sort. There is a kind of snobbery in the study of English Literature like the snobbery of actors who feel themselves akin to the mighty genius of Shakespeare. High-priests abound: but we want competent engineers. And Nowell Smith just does his job careful and first-rate, so that he's making the first text undefaced by endless misprints and Grosartian follies.

Saintsbury turned up the other day. Now he's gone, just in time, for Ch. Collins is coming to dinner. . . .

To MRS. DOWDALL

Burley, 7 Aug. 1905.

I hope you are going to join my "Shock Society." It is formed to give a healthier, firmer tone to morals. Anyone is eligible who is shocked at things. To disapprove *will not do*, you must be shocked. When the original list is complete, only those who are shocked at something which no existing member is shocked at will be eligible.

We have nice vacancies for anyone who is shocked at Bishops. J. S. (Convivial Polygamy) and my sister (Brief widowhood) are original members. There is also a Strachey. (Young men preferring four-wheelers to hansoms), and another friend (High Tea). Will you join? You must fill in a form mentioning your claims. The subscriptions go to working expenses, and the residue to *Putting down things*.

To MISS C. A. KER

Burley, 1-ix-05.

In recognition of your nice letter I think I had better send you another poem. I seem to remember that there

was a King who did this sort of thing with turnips ; whenever anyone pleased him very much, he gave them a turnip. Still, no gift is amiss when simpleness and duty tender it.

*The Mustard Bird*

(Being the only poem that has survived from the pen of Valentine Raleigh Esquire, Cadet in His Majesty's Navy.)

"The Mustard Bird

Is quite absurd,

His form's unseen, his step's unheard,

His step's unheard, his form's unseen,

His home is in the Soup Tureen."

But the business of letters, as you remind me, is to make arrangements. 'Tis Conduct that should be our care, for Poetry's neither here nor there. And Shakespeare may be that or this, but Bradshaw is the guide to bliss. The Critics have it to and fro, but do not tell you where to go. And lofty language stirs the heart, but throws no light on when to start. And metre is a fancy dress, but where is next week's happiness ? When life runs low and ways are dark, my scholar is the booking-clerk. I care not, I, for Sage or Bard ; give me a Civil Railway Guard. There's but one Art for which I care—the simple Art of Getting there.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Dalnotter, 2-2-05.*

Lucie and Adrian are here, in bed mostly with autumn colds. I play golf, which I am always reluctant to do and glad to have done. Being alive is good enough for me ; but the machine groans, and then one must golf. I wish I were healthy, happy, downright, simple, dutiful and bright.

There's nothing in Brandes ; he's just a Continental Jew culture-monger. He doesn't know what poetry is. Keen about his sawdusty creed, namely rationalism, progress, enlightenment—all perfectly abstract. Where the Catholic

Church has it over these professors is that it can look at a flower, and they can't. My friend —— has joined the Pope — the first Scotch University Professor since the Reformation. I must look into this; he is staying here, but I haven't had a chance. I suspect him of being a fantastic like ——, but he is certainly more than that—either mystical or historical. He cares passionately about real things, like apples, and nothing for words ending in “-ation.” I like Shelley better than Byron, as a book, but if they were alive and I knew them I know that I should take to Byron and have no patience with Shelley. I have no use for him except in a book, where he does very well. He was just a bright Being, not a man. You can't blame him, because, you see, he was merely a bright Being. I could live in a tent with Byron, who was never unreal or faddy about ordinary things and was as sincere as an angel when there was no public present. Juan and Haidee and even the stanzas to Augusta (which make me cry) were all for the public. He got a bad woman for his wife (by his own silly youthful lordliness and desire to show that nothing mattered) and, as it happened, this mattered a great deal to him. If she had been as good as Lady Hamilton we should have heard of him outside society verses. As it was she gibbered and lied, because he broke a watch with a poker, and said “Damnably,” and asked if he was in hell, when he woke and saw red bedcurtains. A badhearted, narrow, prig, I fear. She should have stayed Miss Milbanke. Augusta was quite obviously a duck.

### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 19-x-05.*

I have promised to do it, but do let me have your views. The big book is a joy. Only why not all of the Island in the Moon? Every now and then Billy<sup>1</sup> hits it off wonderful.

<sup>1</sup> William Blake.

By the bye—"Ignorance is folly's leasing nurse" surely has nothing to do with "leash." It is "leasings" = lies. Ignorance nurses her young charge Folly on lies. Nothing wrong there.

The big book is a wonderful good book. Whatever I write shall be on that—its matter—and they can stick it where they like.

Bill has kind of put the case of all the artists in the world, who see things while others talk of your view and my view. What is the Devil? Consciousness of self. What is genius? Spontaneity. Nothing else. What is Duty? Slavery, so says Bill, and so say I. I can forgive him being silly-drunk most of the time.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Oxford, 7-xi-05.*

The photographs were, if not good, at least good for me "So that is how I look," said I, and for the next two or three days everyone in the Banbury Road seemed a miracle of comeliness. But I am now through the Valley of Humiliation and doing nicely. There is nothing to say about Philippa. Her new duenna is full of stories, all slight, and too fragile to stand the onslaught of a literary pen. Moreover I forget them.

Adrian's education continues neglected.

We grow accustomed to Oxford. I lectured to-day. To-morrow I do not lecture. Nothing can make this fact other than pleasant. About a thousand new young men arrived in October. This comes of making a fuss and drawing attention to the place. All Americans, and keepers of boarding-houses for Foreign Women students, and Armenians and lovers of Culture make it a point to be acquainted with me. I live in America. One American damsel looked at Magdalen and said—"My, you don't mean to tell me that anyone inhabits these old ruins?"

I suppose I am coming to Glasgow in January—to lecture, as usual. We send our love to you and all.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 17-xi-05.*

I am very thankful for your notes. The year 1810 and the Last Judgment are splendid. And the questions old Crabb asked and Blake left unanswered are very instructive. The worst of it is I have to go to Bodley for these things—and I can't write there.

The system is Rot. I can see that now I've tackled it. And I think I see partly how it grew up. The weak point in William (a curious thing) is not his Reason, which is A.I., but his Imagination. He had the doctrine right enough, but then he applied it too loosely & self-indulgently. It's all very well Jesus Christ being imagination, but when it comes to nothing but menageries of howling giants—s'welp me Bob! I can't show it up, I don't know enough. But an artist could put his finger on the devil-bolts and rotten trivets.

I don't believe there's anything to be had out of him but just the things he is never tired of repeating—and really says clearly enough. He's a fine study chronologically—seems to have changed his tone a little about copulation, as the years rolled on. Gets better and better on forgiveness and there being no such a thing as a bad man. He was deeper than Shelley.

The Press are very sick to be kept waiting, but I can't help it. What's the hurry, I want to know? I shan't write on Blake again. And I shan't tackle the System at all. You see it shows itself up to even a casual eye. Look at the words that catch the eye down page after page—all violent and monotonous. The world's better than that.

Wonderful things the inspired old bustard said from time to time in conversation. The only thing for him to do was

to get disciples. But he didn't want them, and didn't get them. He'd have been spilt on it, more or less, and perhaps he knew. Twelve fishermen wouldn't have been any sort of use to him. He knew what was right but, after all, he couldn't do it—because he was a little bumptious, or vain. His disciples would have got swelled head, and would not have loved him. So they wouldn't have made a pack fit to give a new mythology a fair run.

Following your lead, I've made too high a claim for William. This will give trouble. Either I must re-write, or I must modify at the end. I haven't written much; and it won't be more than 40 pp., I think, when I've done.

To L. R.

*The Athenæum, Pall Mall, S.W.*

19.xi.05.

... The hall-people (with medals) didn't seem at all ashamed of my luggage, but ran out and took it in before I had time to ask whether I might have it. This Club is not suitable for me, all the same. You can't talk politics, for instance, because the idiot who did it is probably at the next table. I am sure Lord Milner was opposite me at lunch. Also it is worse now, for the army people are here. I asked Graves who the man next to us was—because I seemed to know his face—and it was Lord Roberts. A duck, chatting in an empty billiard-room to a fat pursy spade-bearded man of business, soft about the face. So you can't talk very loud; and I leave you to guess how that suits me.

The army people make the waiters smile (after a year of P—and S—). When I went into lunch one was taking leave of another. The old bird who was left at lunch said in a dill-dall-hollum voice. "Well good-bye, see you again some time," and when his friend had gone he kept time with



his feet and sang, *very loud*, a song of which the words were these—Rum ti iddity, Rum ti iddity, Rum ti iddity, Rum.

### TO JOHN SAMPSON

Oxford, 1905.

The worst thing against Billy is the company he keeps. What does A. F. W— see in him now? If A. F. W— got a glimmering of what Blake means he'd die of fright. It's all very interesting. Shows how Christianity caught on by its very rumness; all the loose floating blobs of superstition ran to it. Now they say it's all right.

Wasn't Blake just a little hampered for lack of Education? Not immune against jargon? I have seen very good men suffer this way for lack of familiarity:

I'll tell you what strikes me. He never knew what the tragedy of Thought is. Pain, fear, cruelty, jealousy—all that, but misgiving never. He never felt as Christ did that perhaps it was all in vain. And it is this in him that gives me a faint and far flavour (sometimes) of bumptiousness. He could easily have got the children, like Christ. I doubt if he could have got disciples. The only mad touch in him is in his scorn. But I am fresh from Shakespeare—God love him! "Though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat."

### TO JOHN SAMPSON

2-xii.-05.

DEAR OLD MAN,

I am awfully obliged to you for your notes. I've altered *everything*—I don't know if you'll be satisfied, but if you ain't, this time anyhow we shall differ on what I do think, not on what I don't.

You see Blake's drawing is damned bad and irreverent. The whole thing screams aloud of the anatomy-book. Lots of things he draws by rule of thumb and can't ever

have looked at. They are nowhere in Nature, but they are in anatomy-books. Of course through it all, I don't deny (I assert) there oozes his strange faraway overpowering sentiment of peace and vastness and glory. But the drawing's filthy. It is as if Mackay took to drawing.

To-morrow I must do the rest and finish.

Don't you suppose I haven't toned the thing down a lot. I have. But observe—if you take Blake at this own tally you are bound in honesty to accept the consequences, which are—

(1) There's no room in the world for Sir Joshua.

(2) Jesus Christ didn't quite fetch it off.

Somehow the Sir Joshua consequence makes me angriest—to give *him* up for those muddy frenzies!

If you don't take the lot, it's fairest to say how and why. What it comes to is that Blake was a most wonderful thinker and poet, and a bad artist—in the pictorial sense. My chronological point was carelessness and rot. He was always a bad artist. Job's disgustingly bad in lots of ways. It has splendid effects, all of which you can see best with your eyes shut. That, no doubt, was how he saw them.

Bill's history with me is the history of the old woman who wanted more and more from the genie, till she ended by wanting to be God. I was willing to make him Pope, and I set on the tiara with my own hand. Then he got into his tantrums, and said Nature was all wrong, and he must be given a chance to put it right. I can't stand that. It's vanity and blatancy. If Nature isn't the work of God, then talking about God at all—so much as naming him—is gibberish and folly. So Bill may go back to his hut again, and do designs in mud for the walls of his jakes.

I am angry, you see, but one must take a side. If Blake's right out and out, then every little conceited evangelist—the spawn of blindness upon vanity—is right too, and all the great sane men—draughtsmen and men of science and poets—are wrong. My side's taken, long ago, and I'm not going to try sympathy for Bill at the price of going back on all my dearest friends. Bill can go hang. He

makes me feel ashamed. I have the unclean smell of an evangelical enquiry-room in my nostrils now. Staring eyes and twisted faces and the stink of gas. "There shall be no more sea." That's the word. In place of it, spiritual experiences, I suppose.

Bill was a good man. Perhaps he had a devil. I belong to the party that follows Tirzah.

By the bye, Tirzah as Natural Religion has no meaning in connection with the verses "Thou Mother of my mortal part," &c.

When my wife meets ladies whose behaviour she does not approve, she apologizes for them (in her present mature charity) by saying that perhaps they have a pain. Do you suppose Bill had a pain? Is anything known about his kidneys?

∴

TO JOHN SAMPSON

Oxford, 7.xii.05.

They are in a hell of a hurry at the Press, and I fear there won't be a chance of another revise of Blake. I can only hope you won't dislike anything very much. It's a most casual business, a real attempt at second-sight, i.e. to tell you all about a man by turning over a few of his personal possessions and sniffing at them. I had nothing but *Jerusalem*, Ellis and Yeats, Crabb Robinson, Gilchrist, the Aldine, James Thomson, and (after I had written) Yeats' essays in *Ideas of Good and Evil*.

Anyhow, I think my essay is better than the 150 pages by the fungous brother of the late Dante Rossetti.

I am going to London about the 14th, and thought of calling on Macmillan. Shall I broach the topic of Borrow? or would I come in better later? I am not very thick with Mac, because (I think) he regards me as liable to go fantee without warning—all because I suddenly offered him £100 to be shut of my engagement on the *Men of Letters Shakespeare*. I suppose he thought it was a joke—anyhow,

though I repeated the offer with every circumstance of kindness and reasonable demonstration of its justice, he did not even bother to refuse it in words. I suppose he wasn't accustomed to what all we poor authors have to take and be thankful for. But he gave me an interest in the sale of the book, which no other author, he tells me, of that series has had. And since my struggle to escape arose out of my reluctance to sell my unbegotten Shakespeare out and out, he did answer my offer indirectly. Still, I don't know, till I see him, what my footing as friendly adviser may be.

I like the Press. And I like these little Essay jobs. I think a *magnum opus*, for me, is an *ignis fatuus*. This kind of life will give me time for it, at last, if I like. But I think not. I didn't know how sick I was of daily lecturing till I stopped doing it.

I wish you would come along here some time. There's a room for you, most week-ends. I want to talk to you about the Elizabethan printing-house, which Horace Hart and you have got to explain.

How's old Kuno? when he was last here he was very crusty and contemptuous about the impossibility of getting anything done in England. I asked him who was to blame—besides him and me. He didn't seem to know. Give him my love. There's a man called Synge, a dramatist, who's a jewel. Speaks Irish. Very unlike Yeats; much more *to* him.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

Oxford, 11-xii-05

A little Blake (the Lyrical poems) will reach you soon. It is a kind of "popular" abbreviation of a bigger book, magnificently edited, without critical comment, by my friend John Sampson. The bigger book is much nicer to have. But the little one has an Essay by me, so it is more suitable for my purpose. The Editor agrees with my

essay, except that he doesn't quite like my making depreciatory remarks at the end. Still, he knows what I mean even there, and if the remarks were untrue, he would not know what I mean. I send you the Essay because I do believe you will like bits of it, and I can't think of many people who will. It is really a great chance lost, for I shall never again have so good an opportunity of "explaining" the fascination of people who do what they like, and never blush—that is, of innocence. But I had to do it in the odd time of a fortnight, and the Press wanted only 10 pages. They got 45.

We also send you two Christmas Carol books, shut up with this.

We can't think why you don't come over here sometimes, you who ride in a Motor. This house has more room than the last and is more comfortable. And we very much want to see you.

H—— is really rather a duck, tho' he's a doomed duck, I suppose he will grow into one of the men who govern you and me and say what laws we shall live under, and what—no, he will not say what we shall think. But it's funny enough, without that. I laugh when I think of it, but it makes me like him more.

Don't answer the book. It's an awful nuisance having to read a book *consciously*, so as to be able to double back upon it. I know all about it, for I often get books.

I've just thought of something, so I must go on. Do you get Xmas cards from the ——s? Because I think our Carol books are only an aristocratic variant of those dreadful soulful bits of Browning. Only, you see, we didn't *order* the carol-books; we got a present of a few this afternoon. That makes it not so bad. I don't really care for Browning: I think it's homely (as the Americans say) to keep on talking so much about the soul. And I think it's dreadfully homely to be so reserved and important about the bit you keep in the cupboard. If it's better than the rest it won't take harm from the air. It's silly, too, to put it where it doesn't

help. The Irish Theatre came here the other day and Lucie met them at the station at screech of dawn to tell each of them where to go. She got their names and told each of them the address of his or her entertainer. One little fair haired Irishman was very depressed when he heard he was to go to Balliol. His face fell, and he said, "Can't I go somewhere where I'll be nearer to Miss Gar-r-vey?" So of course he was shifted in the twinkling of an eye, and sent to a house in the very next road, besides having two people, at least (Lucie and his hostess) who were doing all they could for him. Who says the children of light are not wise? I don't know that I like any nation except the Irish. Jas. Bryce is to govern them. He'll die of it, I suppose, and I think he deserves to. There's a limit to stupidity and pompous doctrine, and to woolly-minded cultured men with beards and principles. We can't govern Ireland, because the British Constitution is so arranged that none of us who could do it offhand (and we are many) has the faintest chance of ever being in a Government.

I'm so glad that A. Birrell has got Education to do. He deserves it, too. How lost he'll feel when he finds that sly little jokes don't really do the business.

This is just idle talk, and I must stop, for there's no natural end.

#### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Christmas, 1905.*

. . . I took Valentine to the Magdalen carols last night. When he came back Lucie asked him who was the most agreeable person he had met. He said it was some people who had asked us into All Souls on the way home. This, you must know, was "W.P." and Mr. Doyle. They were at the Carols, and we overtook them on their way back. They were walking in single file, twenty yards apart, "W.P." leading. There was a sort of cheerful endurance about them, like Punch-and-Judy-men moving on to another pitch.

You, who have drunk deep of the Local Poet of the Lakes, will not misunderstand me. Punch and Judy is as old as the Christian Church. They were almost like leach-gatherers, or periwinkle vendors (a not less useful profession).<sup>\*</sup> I am to dine with them to-morrow. . . .

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 1, 1, 06.*

I suppose one does learn a little, even after forty ; and whenever here I come across a man who says that he stands out, and records his protest, on the *principle* of the thing, I strike him off my list of useful allies. There's no need to talk about principles when you are really dying for your race or your religion ; the talk chiefly comes in when you are dressing yourself, not to give anyone pleasure, but against rival beauties.

I wish I could get that Shakespeare begun. I-fear I'm getting middle-aged and shan't capture the zest. Moreover I'm sick of my own syntax. It's stiff and monotonous, and I can't change it. Everything I write seems pretentious. I have had to chuck an article I promised, because I couldn't read it over without nausea.

Also I'm sick of what is called " the serious business of Scholarship "—the baggage of the campaign. I've passed a wasted life ; I ought to have written straight—on things. Now I can't acquire the art.

Doctorates are given daily to men who would never have got to be shop-walkers if they had been drapers' assistants. The academic business is, in the main, a small-minded affair. The Comedy of Pedantry seems to be two-thirds of life. Soldiers are just the same. So, I suppose are sailors, even. The comfort is that Nelson hadn't a touch of it ; nor had Napoleon, and their contemporaries did really know that here was the real thing. Men are stuffy little fellows. Their manliness bores me—it is almost universal, and

humanity is very rare. A very wise woman, young and free, once told me that for the majority of human creatures only one virtue is possible—appreciation. The good, says she, are those that see power or virtue or beauty in those who have it, or a piece of it. The rest is vanity. This single virtue is not common: the poor things keep on struggling in a web of phantoms. They play with dolls all their lives. It's no good talking to them about wisdom and beauty. They have a complete system. There's even a doll Hell.

This is not Timonism, I am an optimist. They are saved, most of them by their guts. A doll has no guts.

### TO JOHN SAMPSON

25-ii-06.

I understand C. Wesley wrote 6,500 Hymns, all extant, and many of them sentimental. I. Watts is the rock of ages among Hymn-writers, first and (easily) greatest. It's his language that knocks me, tip-top gravity and simplicity. [Why can't Francis Dodd give us a breezy edition (illustrated) of the Wesleys? You must not go and tangle yourself up in that.]

I think you ought to do Romany for about half an hour a day, which tots up at the end of the year, and edit Watts at another table. I'm so keen about it that I'll collaborate as much or as little as you like. Turn the engine . . . on to the text. And let us have a life (not devotional) and an Introduction. Let us raid the evangelicals and bring away their poet, and wash him and dress him and crown him. They will look funny when they find him gone.

Some verses from Watts' worst book.  
· viz. *Horae Lyricae* (2nd ed. 1709.)

p. 217. Move faster on, great Nature's Wheel,  
Be Kind, ye rolling Powers,  
Hurl my Days headlong down the Hill  
Of undistinguish'd Hours.



Be dusky all my rising Suns,  
Nor smile upon a Slave :  
Darkness and Death, make haste at once  
To hide me in the Grave.

p. 171. Swift as the Sun revolves the Day  
We hasten to the Dead,  
Slaves to the Wind we puff away,  
And to the Ground we tread.

p. 75. The Tide of Creatures ebbs and flows,  
Measuring their Changes by the Moon :  
No Ebb his Sea of Glory knows ;  
His Age is one Eternal Noon.

p. 56. Place me on the bright Wings of Day  
To travel with the Sun ;  
With what Amaze shall I survey  
The Wonders thou hast done.

p. 33. Shout to the Lord, ye surging Seas,  
In your eternal Roar ;  
Let Wave to Wave resound his Praise,  
And Shore reply to Shore.

p. 10 Life, Death, and Hell, and Worlds unknown  
Hang on his firm Decree :  
He sits on no precarious Throne,  
Nor borrows Leave to Be.

p. 11 Lord of the Armies of the Sky,  
He marshals all the Stars ;  
Red Comets lift their Banners high,  
And wide proclaim his Wars.

Is this not worth doing ? If there's finer stuff of a divine nature knocking around, I shall be glad to have the business address for reference.

The preface to *Horae Lyricae*, xxiii pp., shows that Isaac knew exactly what he was doing, and had carefully read

Milton, Boileau, Cowley, Davenant, and John Norris & Co. A good edition might make a stir among hymnologists and even congregations. It is long since the theory of sacred poetry was tackled.

TO D. NICHOL SMITH

*Oxford, 12-iii-06.*

We go to Glasgow about the 10th of April to get my ridiculous degree. I call it ridiculous because I have been in the kitchen where these things are cooked. I take it with pleasure, as a testimony of friendship from Phillimore, Latta, and others.

We have bifurcated the English school (leaving for common ground translation from A.S and M.E. ; Chaucer ; and Shakespeare). W. P. Ker has pronounced his curse on the separation. Bradley has blessed it. Anyhow, it's done.

I shall never have peace or freedom till I sit down and write a book called "Shakespeare". I don't want to: I prefer smaller jobs.

— has given his lecture, a queer performance, about nothing in particular, very rambling in structure, full of aureate phrasing, describing poets and poetic epochs in terms almost wholly borrowed from landscape-painting and ornithology ; decorated here and there with little Oxford jokes and the shy man's satire ; rather wilted, unreal, and hectic ; pleasant to listen to, because of the loving and minute care spent on tinted epithets ; and, on the whole, almost dangerously unlike the writing or speech of Samuel Johnson. The man has no morals and no philosophy, oceans of taste, and a little streak of fervent politics borrowed from decadent artists ; he is a Socialist in a pastoral play, and (I would swear) thinks the world vulgar.

TO D. NICHOL SMITH

*Uffington, Faringdon, 30-iii-06.*

The "Speaker" in a review laudatory of my Blake preface, accused me of proving Blake to be coherent by putting the coherence into him and then triumphantly finding it there. But it is really there, only Blake was not an educated man, and educated men do not understand much that falls outside Aristotle's categories.

I have no Shakespeare here except the folio and the Venus, Lucrece, &c., facsimile. I almost despair of writing on him—I think the only way will be to assume that my readers have never heard of him; and to do that, besides possibly annoying the vainer of them, will involve quotation—which must not be. I think I could write my book in prison, with the folio.

I begin to hate criticism. Nothing can come of it. Dryden never really started anything except satire. He's at his best when he talks of himself—what a judgment of ironical fate on a great classic critic! In a few more years all professors of literature (owing to "Schools") will be as illiterate as zoologists, or more so. Already aspiring students enter that golden realm backwards and make acquaintance with the Court under the guidance of the plumbers.

I find there are at least thirteen pseudo-Shakespearian plays—every one worse than the others. I want the Press to publish them all in a single cheap volume.<sup>1</sup> I don't see how we can touch them, except "Pericles". But I should like to have them all in a legible double-column volume for half-a-crown or so.

We have a new house twenty miles from here, and move in summer.

<sup>1</sup> Published 1908,—*Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. Tucker-Brooke.

## TO F. S. OLIVER

*Oxford, 2-iv-06.*

I have not done with your book,<sup>1</sup> but I am roused to the point of writing. I think it is a swell work, of a very rare kind, a real live book on Politics. I remember that Theodore Beck told me that he had used Sidgwick's book on Politics with his Indian students, and that in a country like India, where you see all the bones of the Leviathan, Sidgwick's book was unreal, vaporous, pedantic, pettifogging and meaningless. I thought of this because your book is just the sort of work he wanted, and couldn't find.

I like the short interspersed dissertations on things at large—like them almost best. Of the portraits, Jefferson is a masterpiece. I don't know whether it's like Jefferson, but I could bet it is, for it certainly is a real man.

Has Hamilton ever before had a book on him written this side of the water? Yours ought to make a noise in America. I revel in you when you tell Americans the truth.

I am disappointed with the illustrations. That of Madison is like nobody in particular—it tells you nothing. Jefferson is better, and when I looked at Aaron Burr I put him down for a sensualist,—one of those baby-faced complacent young men of the world whom one meets often enough at the Universities. I was amused to find, later, that he was always making love.

Hamilton is a Scot, pure and simple, but, to judge from his eye, I should not have expected to find him so wholly free from abstract fanaticism as, it seems, he was. There's no doubt, on the pictures, that Hamilton and Washington were the swells. George (again on the pictures) has the much larger temper—I don't say mind. Hamilton's face is like a sword-blade—he doesn't look as if he'd wait till you finished, as George would. I should expect him to be intolerant (too intolerant) of the vague.

<sup>1</sup> *Alexander Hamilton.*

You are splendidly clear of party gabble, which is shown up everywhere when building begins.

I am subdued to my claw-breech profession, and made a note or two, on expression, not matter. When you reach a second edition I will send them to you, if you like. They are minuscules, and I daresay you will laugh at them. *Exempli gratia* ; there's a passage where you (very properly) mention the Red Sea, and then, two lines later, the real sea, and there's a two-second hitch while the mind of the reader gets off the metaphor on to the fact. That's the trivial sort of nonsense that I profess. Goodbye. Perhaps I'll write again. I think the Epilogue very judicious and telling.

You ought to have a great effect on to-day, for the allegory is everywhere. But your title is a heavy obstacle, for the ordinary reader. It'll take a little time to find you out.

TO GEORGE H. PROTHERO

Oxford, 23.5.06.

It was good to hear from you. I'm hard at work, trying to stop all these things, such as emptiness, vulgarity and the like. But I can't ; even when I get the patient all to myself. A Rhodes Scholar (not typical, for many of them are good) read a paper a month or so ago to a sort of research class of mine. It was empty, magniloquent, abstract, flatulent, pretentious, confused, and sub-human. I could have wept salt tears. But I couldn't do anything else : the young man wanted a clean heart and a new spirit, not a little topdressing. That's my trouble ; literature even at its worst, is tremendously expressive : substitute a public uniform, and you get more decency, but you don't increase the amount of the real thing.

Still it's a good thing to try all ways, and this is a social age. Only, a society generally ends in being the "engine" of X. or Z. Your Historical Society is the right sort ; I'm

going to try to get into that as soon as I can buy up the back parts.

The English Association was made for English teachers to meet and talk. Also to draft schemes for English in schools. I am sorry to see that it has gone on the warpath.

They all do ; either to smash something else, or to bully someone else into doing what they were associated to do.

A Society must either drink or publish ; if it does neither it becomes the happy hunting ground of cantankerous people who have all their afternoons to spare.

### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Oxford, 24-v-06.*

By how slight a hold do we enjoy the affection of our friends ! A mere nothing, a mottled or speckled appearance,<sup>1</sup> an occasional cough with a gulp in it, a nervous dislike of water, and they are gone, like midges, down the wind. Those of us who are handsome and hale have great responsibilities. Friendship is ours, and we must make the most of it while we can.

But I did not mean to write about the human race, which makes too much fuss about virtue to be altogether pleasing to me. It was yotting that was on my mind. With regard to yotting it would be nicest in September, for then I should have a stint of work behind me (I hope) and should be as free in mind as it is in my nature to be. But whether this is not putting deliberate temptation in the way of Providence—that's the point. Last September was all that could be desired, but the first sign I give of supposing this to be the rule, I shall be nabbed, I know. Still, the weather is only one thing among many. Let it know its place.

I have been reading the *Times* in bed. Mr. Healy is now my leader. How good for the Liberals to hear a religious

<sup>1</sup> He had been laid up with chicken-pox.

speech (the real thing) for once ! ' None of them has since cheeped about religion. They probably know that they haven't got it, and are ashamed to go on hawking their oleo-margarine as if it were butter. My leader is against all the things that I have long thought superstitious, reading and writing and the like. Besides, I always liked the Irish best, and it's priggish to like people and not to give them what they want. So, although it is too late, I don't mind Home Rule.

I have been asked by Lady F. B. to meet Arthur Balfour. I'm rather angry with him (owing to reading the papers) but I must put away sin and wrath. I do wish that some one would get hold of a private person (quite unknown) to make a cult of, and to show to friends. Why should only the notorious be exhibited ?—as if only mythological pictures were hung in frames, and the rest, Dutch, Impressionist and so on, used only to sit on. All my favourite people are private. Even a very good hostess is a little too public for me, though useful to the race. And (I have noticed it often) as people grow important they become more and more like a newspaper—with all the right columns, leaders for serious thought, and correspondence for special information, and a reasonable amount of decorous personal items. Now I think of it, no-one could possibly be really popular except by being like a newspaper. The human race after years of experiment has found out exactly what it wants (besides bread and shelter) : it wants a newspaper every morning.

You may say that there are some who are public, and important, and very great, but you are quite unchanged by it. But one can't like those people ; they must be such humbugs. Why do they go on with their odious publicity ? Unless of course to earn a living, like a clown, which is quite decent.

This is more like a sermon than a newspaper. And some of us are like novels, and some like Parish Magazines.

## TO MISS C. A. KER

25-v-06.

The book<sup>1</sup> hadn't come when I wrote. I like it—especially the Prize Canary, the Valentine, and the Owner's Son. It is W. W. Jacobs in the lingo of Wee Macgregor. I haven't read so "light" a book for years. It seems to me to shirk all the real difficulties of life, and even of navigation. And Ibsen is dead! He might have given us a deeper treatment of the coasting trade, being himself a kind of shock-headed hardmouthed Plymouth Brother.

Ibsen represents very exactly all that I most dislike. The Evangelist with a wooden leg! They are praising him up to the skies now. But he won't wash. He never took delight in anything but his own mop-headed whiskered methodical self. I'm glad he's dead. Some good people liked his books. He caught them on their stupid side. The leavings of poor old Herbert Spencer doted on him. Now they will have to find some one else—horrid thought, can there be a third?

My doctor has just been and says I'm quite well. So now I must go into the cruel World again.

Philippa is quite well. So's Adrian. Adrian spent a week in the New Forest with a little boy called Dick. When he had gone, Dick said one morning at breakfast—

"Aunt Eleanor, is God alive or dead?"

A. E. "Alive."

D. "Well, Adrian says he's dead. He says he must be, because he was killed."

How little we know of what's going on.

## TO D. NICHOL SMITH

Ashton Keynes, 30-vi-06.

I am highly honoured, and gratified that the proposal<sup>2</sup> came from Mr. Ellershaw, who has never drunk with me, and so

<sup>1</sup> *The Vital Spark*, by Neil Munro.

<sup>2</sup> To confer the honorary degree of D.Litt. of the University of Durham.



may be presumed to be a greater friend to truth than to Plato.

These things are our odd visitation, and it takes me some little effort to abandon my cherished profession of free lance. But very few men can afford to refuse a Baronetcy. I know one who refused, and doubtless he thought well of himself that day. But then he is not really an important or distinguished man, only a useful municipal busy body, so the years have passed, and he is plain Mister, and the world has not heard his name, and most of his acquaintances have long ago forgotten that "he could an if he would." I fancy he regrets his heroic choice.

I am face to face with William, on a mere handful of books, and am not happy. But books don't help much. The last I have seen is —, another Doctoral prize thesis, as dead as mutton.

The real difficulty is that I don't want to write anything that William Himself would have thought rot. Now I don't care in the least what Wordsworth thinks of my opinions concerning him. So this is a new and hard case.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*The Mill House, Ashton Keynes,*

*July 24, 1906.*

I hammer away at Bill. As I go, emergent topics occur—I think I shall let go, and discuss them in passing. And this is to be a short book! The first chapter, called *Shakespeare*, ain't bad—it just tells you in a few clear words what Bill was really like By One Who Knows Him.

The second called *Stratford & London* has been put in hand. It tells you in a few judicious sentences what kind of a bloke John Shaks. was, by one who sees through him. And it's now going on to mention other points. But Lord, it's slow on the hoof and about 2pp. of print in a working day. And I can already hear the Chorus of Snorts that will





greet it, because it casually mentions some little things that have always been known to the few,—but not to the crew.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ashton Keynes, Cricklade, Wilts,  
A Wednesday.*

If I am not an easy guest, that, I take it upon myself to say, will be your fault. All my fittings are perfectly elastic ; you can press the button, and I am gone. I shan't weary, not when I've got rid of William—my William. The beast. I don't know why I feel so savage at him, except that when a nurse is kept from having her day out, she generally slaps the baby. It's G. Macmillan and my own foolish weak nature that need punishing, and only one of them is getting it. G. Macmillan sits in Paternoster Row (I hate the piety of publishers, and all their nice feelings) like a great crab howking at the edible parts of authors.

One Word More—as Mr. Browning has beautifully said. A mere wire, and I stay here. I shan't be disappointed, or rather, there will be a grim but real consolation in knocking another chapter off William. All I leave of him will be served up to me again, cold, in Oxford, like yesterday's porridge, to be finished there. A cheerful discipline.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ashton Keynes, Cricklade, Wilts,  
16 Aug. 1906.*

I have had a day off from Weary Willy, owing to my stock of things to say giving out prematurely. I could stay two or three days or even over a Sunday. I'm not fit for human company,—just a weary man in a room the size of a meat-safe, pumping up splenetic utterances on a dead author, and getting angrier every day. It's no sort of life. Now and

again I take a short outing and scowl on the world. All because I don't want to say anything, and I've got to. It's a comfort to hear that Mr. Ker shares my outlook. I belong to the Guild of the Black Dog. Members of that guild are either blissfully happy or don't believe in the possibility of happiness,—turn about. I have noticed that when they are really hit hard, they often take it serenely. Quite peaceful on a sinking ship, and fretting to death over a suburban train that goes nowhere in particular. And the cheerful competent people often can't stand a facer. They're accustomed to arrange everything, I suppose.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Dalnotter, 19-9-06.*

The junction worked beautifully at Crian Lariùh. There was a young stout athletic Englishwoman ordering porters about in a high superior voice that just fascinated me. I followed her about gaping like a fish. When she'd got all she wanted, the rest of us crawled out of corners with our poor luggage, to see if anyone would take it up too. No one could move or speak till she had finished. We were birds to a snake. Tremendous! The porters just trembled. She was not beautiful. About 30. O, very stout! Hale. It's the De Vere voice. I wondered whether it would work in a real shipwreck. "These two in the life-boat, and the wraps and the cloak in my seat in the Captain's cutter, and the two large trunks in the jolly boat, and get them all off at once, please." Suppose someone laughed? No-one does. She'd die of apoplexy on the spot.

TO THOMAS SECCOMBE

*Dalnotter House,  
Old Kilpatrick, N.B.,  
25 Sept. 1906.*

I am honoured of your invitation, and should much like to join the Titmarsh Club if my disqualifications as a

member are not prohibitive. They are—first, that I can very seldom come during the Oxford term, so that my attendances would be infrequent ; and, second, that I am not sealed of the tribe of W.M.T. I rather dislike him. When he speaks of snobs, I cannot abide him. Even his English has, I think, been overpraised. But he made living creatures, so I do not deny that he is a god. In India I believe one is allowed to worship with all sorts of reservations at the shrine of a strange cult. I don't know if this is part of your scheme : many one-man societies exist to bully the infidel. So I put myself in your hands. I notice in your list of members one or two old friends whom I should like to meet.

I have been reading your little book on Eliz<sup>a</sup> Drama (it is yours, I suppose) and should like to say how much I like some of the good criticism that is tucked away in notes. It masquerades as a handbook, but under that humble disguise it conceals much that is new.

#### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 28 ; x ; 06.*

Old William has gone and frozen on my hands. I can't budge him. There he is, a noble torso, and I can't put on the head. All because I am a Public Man, and so have to do everyone's business except my own. Damn all members of Parliament, and all memorials & testimonials. Damn all dinners given to anyone. Damn all bright intelligent correspondents, and aspiring authors, and old family friends who have a genius up their sleeve, and damn the nothing that comes of it all, and damn the Post Office.

I was awfully sorry not to come to Liverpool and see you. But I have hardly any teeth, and must come soon to get some.

TO W. P. KER

*Oxford, 5.xi.06.*

Can you readily give me on a postcard the reference to C. Lamb's dislike of *All's Well*? There is no index to my copies of his works, not even to the edition which that whited sepulchre called Ainger issued, so I can't find it.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 6.xi.06.*

. . . It's a sad little book on W. S. But the word "evince" doesn't occur in it, and the clichés are kept down in number. I've just struck out "profound" before "thought". There's no such thing, except in melodrama; there's only thought.

TO W. P. KER

*Oxford, 7.xi.06.*

Very many thanks. It was Mary Lamb who stuck fast in *All's Well*. So I thought C. Lamb had stuck too, and I misapplied what you said. I have stuck in it, and can find no valuable obsairve to make.

I have been reading Schofield on Mediaeval Lit. It makes me cry. These school-boy books, by bright students, won't do. He has not read the books he talks about. He does not authorise his statements of fact. He tries to stun criticism by exhibiting a scrap-heap of machinery. It's all very sad. And if you want to read a book he mentions, he mostly doesn't tell you where it is. His English is sloppy. He was begotten by a thesis on an endowment. He is now teaching pupils how to write worse books of the same kind. I daresay he's one of the best of the Americans and a pleasant little man. But I write these few lines just to say what I think, before human considerations, and the

pity of it, and your tenderness for all the little ones of the craft, inhibit me. So here's the truth, and if you think it indecent, don't let's speak of it again.

I wish Francis Bacon had tried a history of literature. He'd have done a ripper. But he and other high-class tailors found other customers, so our job has fallen to the retailers of shoddy.

### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Oxford, 28.xi.06.*

This is to certify that on Saturday last at 4.48 p.m. the words "Sound of Kerrera" were uttered in the Schools by the Romanes lecturer. The thing was done quite easily—it appears, or rather is alleged, that King Alexander of Scotland had a sort of a night-mare there. I nearly lost sixpence by offering to bet that the occasion would be made in connection with the ferry to Mull and Iona. The timidity and suspicion of Oxford gamblers saved me my money.

The lecture<sup>1</sup> was about the best I have ever heard, full of praises of anarchy, and drink, and fighting for fighting's sake; and rightly contemptuous of high principle, and bishops, and all the complicated nonsense of civilisation. It was pleasant to see the audience failing to smile. Some of them kept on gaping, waiting for the point, when the dear little point had just gone by, as quiet as a mouse, under their very noses. I don't think the English came very well out of this lecture, except Mr. Godley, who seemed to me to be getting full marks. Mr. Hadow also got a good many. He said that the lecture was not much like Walter Pater,—which was a good observe. And I wondered what the Professor of Poetry was thinking. Here were the things he came houth to escape from—low, rough things nailing him in

<sup>1</sup> *Sturla the Historian*—the Romanes Lecture, 1906, delivered by Prof. W. P. Ker on Nov. 24 in the Schools.



his very bower of culture and art.' There was a story about a king who swam away from people who were after him, and caught hold of a rope to climb on to a ship in the harbour, and a man on the ship took a boat-hook and prodded the king, and said "Go away." So the king had to go away. I liked that story very much. And I forgot to say there was a good passage about the writer (Sturla, I think they call him) who was not against the Gods, but rather encouraged them because he found them so enjoyable.

All this is mere spotty impression, but I think I've said enough to show what a hard job the lecture was for all kinds of ardent flighty and woolly persons, agnostics, moralists, officials, duty-mongers and dissenters. The poor women, as it seemed to me, hadn't a chance; they must have felt almost as if they didn't exist. I expected to see some of them pinching themselves, to make sure they were alive. But they didn't—I daresay they felt that it was all long ago, and far away, and that refinement, and sick-nursing, and social charm are pretty safe, after all. They were just a little on their guard, and didn't laugh at the boat-hook.

There was also (in the lecture) a father who geyed his son, and pulled the boy's leg in a very unsympathetic fashion. But it's too long to tell. The lecture as a whole was entirely in favour of *crusty* persons,—old gardeners, or pirates, or gouty majors would have got good marks. But the gardener's daughter, and all sylphs, and soul-awakeners, and young tenors and curates, would have done better to stop away.

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed seeing some of the men trying hard to understand, and some of the women nailing tact to the mast and pretending hard that they understood and that it was all perfectly right. But Iceland, which is very nice *in its place*, would never be allowed to become really important *here*. We, the heirs of all the ages. O, Culture's a lovely thing, and I must go back and do it.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Oxford, 29.11.06.*

I am very sorry for your trouble. It doesn't matter where there is courage. I think humility is the solution of almost everything. You can't tell whether you have it, till the time comes. It's a comfort to think that the full enjoyment of life makes for it. Everyone who complains and is disappointed and wronged seems to miss it. It takes something that in some ways is like enormous power of mind (but in others is utterly different) to see things right. The intellectual fail. The Saints get through quite easy.

I have finished my lectures and in three weeks am going to finish my book, one way or another. Then we are going to South Africa early in June.<sup>1</sup> It's like a year out of life, for all the rest is work and term.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 8.xii.06.*

I have stuck up in Bill, so I think I'll write to you just for friendliness. I mentioned you the other day to Greene of Magdalen and I could see that I became glorious in his eyes at once, because I know you. He said that you are very deep in Romany, just as really spiritually-minded Scots talk of one another as being "far ben". Why shouldn't you come here for a week-end next term and meet him?

I made a joke in my head today. It came of reading about the Education Bill. The Dissenters believe in only one sacrament—extreme unction. This is the joke. I wish some little Pascal would take the dissecting knife, to them. He would have to know them from the inside, so as to get right on to the enlarged spleen and the inflamed gut. It's

<sup>1</sup> He was invited to lecture in Johannesburg during July, 1907, and he also lectured in Pretoria, Kimberley, Harrismith, Bloemfontein, Maritzburg, Grahamstown, Durban, and Capetown.

not the brain and heart that are the seat of the mischief. Bishops are bad no doubt, but I do believe they are less pretentious. Well, never mind.

I have been reading York Powell's *Life*. There is some good tight description and criticism in it. The letters are curious—do you notice how completely he takes on the colour of his correspondent? To some he's a kind of big elder brother, cheering them on. With Mackay he lets loose. I wish there were more of the best kind of his letters. The Remains interest me, but I don't believe I should care for them if I hadn't known him. Writing was not his game. He lived too much in the sympathies and impressions of the passing hour to be able to concentrate his imagination. He was magnificent at picking up scraps and making a human use of them.

I like Elton's work, and think it gives a true picture of one aspect. But it makes Powell too rigid and definite. In quickness of adaptation he was more like a woman than any man I ever met. From the *Life* one gets a vague impression of difficulties and reasoned choices and crises—all of which had no existence. His feeling for Science, even, he seems to me to have picked up from those he admired and loved,—it wasn't native to him. He had sorrows enough, but perplexities—none. There's always someone to sympathise with. It was queer in life, and it's queer in the book, how he throws himself in with the second-rate business of somebody else. It's a fine trait in Powell: he knew what you can say to an author, as well as an author's wife does. The thing has to be *splendid*, first of all.

I can't help thinking of Powell as a kind of floating sympathy. He needed a stronger man with him—all the time,—needed it so badly that failing the best, Vigfusson or R.A.M.S., he took what came, and attached himself, almost like a disciple. He was happiest with the best, because his quick tact told him the truth, if only half consciously.

I remember he wrote to me about *Milton*, and I was very pleased, but not convinced as I was convinced by any word

of praise from R.A.M.S. It was all about my work, and nothing about Milton's.

He drifted : and enjoyed : and served the first comer—like the fairy in quest of a soul. He had a most beautiful simplicity. Thought and Literature were too complex for him, except in their elements.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 29.xii.06.*

I have sent my MS. to Macmillan. He will hustle with the proofs, for I told him that I shall have no time after Spring.

You are to have them in slip. Please treat them as if you were my posthumous editor, which I hope you will be. All blunders, gush, nonsense, foolish repetitions, idle dogma, and other sorts of rot to be severely commented on.

I have not the least idea whether this book is good or bad. It gets going, sometimes, for a page or two, and then switches off, and stops. Never mind. Shakespeare, as I remarked to a friend, is the kind of author that I like. Wordsworth is not. So I should be sorry if I had done better by the man to whom I am by far the less friendly. But I daresay I have.

I think Falstaff is good. So is Shakespeare's Women. There are some smites, at culture, and philology, and other things, which I should not in the least mind deleting. Say if you think the end will do. I could change it to a few paragraphs on what the existence of Bill has meant for the English people. But I don't want to have to think again.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*18. i. 07.*

MY DEAR OLD BOR,

Take notice of what I say about Shaks. not being Nature or God. Because about half through the book I say he's Nature and on the last page I say he's God, or very like. I don't think it matters, but you have a look.

Sometimes I do nothing because I can't find the right words. Other times, perhaps, because it's horribly difficult to patch one part without putting what precedes and follows out of gear. For instance, I'm rather sorry to lose the little village which is more like Stratford than Stratford itself. But it's useless apart from the curse which has gone. N. S. likes the Curse, but wants no trace of Baconians.

TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Oxford, 3.iii.07.*

I've told them to send you my *Shakespeare*, which gave me a dog's life for the last six months of last year, save for certain golden days on the banks of the Clyde. It's owing to you, by the bye, that I didn't take £150 out of hand for English copyright. You made some remarks about Dowden's Primer, which I digested and applied. So now I have got terms which will be better than the old when 24,000 copies or thereabouts have sold. My public is 1000, so unless the advance in the price of coal continues I don't quite see—— But I am very glad indeed to keep my share in the book. If you and the like of you don't care for it I shall abandon the author's trade.

I should like to send one to Dowden, who was my earliest teacher. Of course I don't sing his tune exactly; he wouldn't wish for that; but I am sure that bits and shades and echoes of a book like his get into all later criticism. Where he has really made his mark his view is incorporated in a kind of commonplace of orthodoxy and he soon loses all credit for it.

Now about those papers.<sup>1</sup> Tell me what you want, and I'll draft them, leaving you to add, omit and alter, and print.

It will all be very easy, anyhow, for two examiners who

<sup>1</sup> He was then External Examiner at Glasgow University, where Professor Macneile Dixon had succeeded him.

work like sporting dogs, by the smell. I don't dare to confess this to really conscientious arithmetical, *good* examiners. I give *them* percentages, with decimals put in here and there as a guarantee of exactitude ; and the amusing thing is that I have never known them cheep, although in Wales three of them by law, and two of them in fact, went over all my work independently.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Mill House, Ashton Keynes,*

13.iv.07.

I came here from Scotland yesterday, to my healthy family. They seem to fill in the day very well. Valentine and Hilary are now hunting for newts, and there is to be a dramatic and musical entertainment in a day or two. I sit in a very small study and write letters and pay bills. Change is an illusion : except for the whiskers I exactly resemble the Early Victorian father.

I will write no letter, for indeed I like talking better.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ashton Keynes, 17 April, 1907.*

I am very sorry. I think I had better come on Tuesday, on my way back to Oxford, so to say, unless you'd rather not when the time comes. I don't fear infection so much as I do eucalyptus. Those who fear infection are half-dead already ; it's not them that enjoys themselves. Which last sentence reminds me that the Clarendon Press wants me to write a hand-book of English Composition for the school-bred young. I wonder.

I am spending sleepless nights (I mean I have had a slight feeling of annoyance) because my final proofs (irrecoverable) contain the statement that in *As You Like It* "the only tree is the oak." This statement I accepted from an

anonymous and immoral owl who some ten years ago wrote a most engaging article in the *Quarterly* on Shakespeare's Wild Life. Then, being in bed one day, when the book had slipped through my fingers, I remembered the following trees are mentioned in that play—

The Holly  
The Palm-tree  
The Olive-tree  
The Hawthorn.

not to mention the gum-tree in the upper branches of which my critical reputation is now lodged.

TO T. H. WARREN, PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN

28.iv.07.

I was just going to thank you for your *Magdalen*, which I have looked at with great pleasure and mean to read and master. I must make myself competent, so that I could take at least a creditable Pass degree in the History of the College.

Everyone says it was a horribly difficult thing to write on Shakespeare. So it was and is, I suppose, but I didn't think of it that way, or I couldn't have written.

I can't write a book commensurate with Shakespeare, but I can write a book by me,—which is all that any one can do. I feel as free to think about Shakespeare as to think about the moon, without putting myself into competition. So I was not conscious of impudence, or even of ambition. Every preacher, every Sunday, attempts a more ambitious task. If the book can be read with pleasure, that is an ample reward. The material reward would be much ampler if it could be *used* in schools, which I do not think it can. There are limits to the process of combining one's own amusement with other people's instruction.

I hope it is not conceited to be as pleased as I am with your generous praise.

## TO MISS C. A. KER

*Oxford, 28.4.07.*

I advise you to skip Chaps.<sup>1</sup> II, III, and IV. Most of what I have to say is in the other Chaps. If you like it, I'm pleased, if not, never mind, I'll write a better book presently, if I'm spared.

We seem to be going to go to every place in S. Africa that we ever heard the name of. The itinerary for the trip has just arrived.

On second thoughts I don't think I'll write that book. It's a dreadful vulgar button-holing tub-thumping business, is authorship. Under-bred, I call it, and so egotistic. We all have thoughts ; but some of us are vulgar about them and some (those I like) are not. So no more at present.

Philip has a thing called Balu—a woolly bear, which she adores. They are always together and I now see nothing of her ; it is like having engaged people in the house. If you ask her a question she tells you what Balu thinks. If you speak to him, she replies, in a squeaky voice. He is of my life a thing apart ; he is Philip's whole existence. "Would I like to kiss him ?" I would not.

## TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Oxford, 12.v.07.*

This is just to thank you for my kind visit. I seem to remember that I was depressed and comfortable ; I brought the depression, and found the comfort. I remember my walk down to the village to buy tobacco : I should like to take that walk every day. But I must always bear in mind that Men are dying of Ennui in the New Forest.

I have just had a long (rather woolly) letter from ——. He thinks that now, in this year of grace 1907, and not later, some sort of policeman must settle what Shakespeare's

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare.*



Sonnets mean. It is of the first importance to the human race, he says, to be able to believe that they are sincere. But this cannot be until a Theory, not less bulky than S. Lee's, is proved and established. A rather illiterate letter, very earnest, very anxious to get things in order, so that bullying may begin.

I understand I have been furiously attacked in yesterday's *Academy*, by a man I don't know, one Frank Harris. The man who told me (no partisan of mine) had to burn the paper, he said. It's a funny world, but I think my little book must matter, to be so hated. It will be a great disappointment if it turns out that some fancied grievance is the cause. Churton Collins sincerely hated *Style*, and said so, and I liked his review. In fact, I saw what he meant.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Bishop's House, Pretoria,*

28-vii-07.

It's impossible to begin at the beginning in describing Africa, for it's very old, and very worn out and dusty, more like a rubbish heap or a plan for a rockery than anything else. But we got here all right, and I've given my first two lectures. General Smuts was in the chair at the first, and General Hildyard was to have been in the chair at the second, only his wife was ill. I had lunch at the Club here yesterday with one Malcolm, Lord Selborne's private secretary. With him were a lot of young men commonly called "Lord Milner's kindergarten"—brought from Oxford to run the country. At the next table were Botha and the six members of the Cabinet. It's a queer state of things. A good many of the kindergarten have gone home—been "retrenched," they call it here—since the new Government began. One is in the Upper House or Council of the Transvaal. One edits a Johannesburg paper. I only wish you were here: you'd revel in the politics, which are carried on in drawing-rooms quite as much as anywhere else. The

fighting is incessant, and it's all done with nods and wreathed smiles. In my opinion English is winning, but the Government does not encourage English people to come here, so I suppose Dutch blood will predominate, but "home" will mean England, for the very simple reason (discovered by Lucie) that it's smarter to be Progressive. But what's most needed is you, to take General Botha apart and talk to him as you talked to the Reverend Herbert Story.

We are going to Johannesburg tomorrow, where things seem to be in a poor way; no money, and everyone just merely hanging on.

This is a pleasant kind of garden city, and a lovely climate, cool and sunny. We have been several times to the Zoo, where there's a lion about a foot and a half high that you're allowed to have out on a chain. He's like a kitten, but he's growing up fast.

We were three weeks on the voyage. After about a week I fell a victim to bridge with an administrator of Swaziland, a public prosecutor of Cape Colony, and an army captain in charge of stores here—good people. There were games all day—even Lucie had to play cricket. We enjoyed it very much.

I hope the boys are good; then they will be happy. I'm afraid there's a chance that they'll be happy even if they aren't very good, you're so forgiving. Please give them our love.

It's as easy coming to Africa as going to (say) Paisley. The local railway out of Cape Town reminded us of the Dumbarton line and Partick West and Scotstoun. But there was no Kilpatrick.

We have booked berths on the "Briton" leaving Cape Town on Sept. 11th, arriving Southampton on Sept. 28th. Then to Oxford, and then after a few days, I hope, to Kilpatrick.

They're treating us very well; we're staying with the Bishop because he married an old friend of Lucie's, and we've dined out with two different judges, called Rose Innes,

and Solomon. I never before had an audience for a mere lecture so full of different professions, lawyers, cabinet ministers, judges, soldiers, ministers of religion—all there. It was a very one-horse sort of lecture, but it did all right.

I'm deep in S. African politics, and go and lunch with people to discuss them. It's rather awful—the politics are all right, they only need the right handling, and there are too few people fit to do it. Lots of hide-bound partisans who think you can do something by being snouty. So if we fail it will be for lack of brains, as usual. I don't think we shall fail. But it is a pity to see all this fun running to seed while you, for instance, are talking to station-masters or gardeners.

Our love to you both. Goodbye. I hope you've had a decent summer and few worries.

#### TO MRS WALTER CRUM

*Union-Castle Line,  
R.M.S. "Walmer Castle."*

We have got through the best part of our tour and are now on our way from Natal to Grahamstown, which I believe is an ancient centre of culture, suitable for lectures. So I thought I would write to you to say that a fortnight after this we arrive in England. I hope the boys have been well and good.

We have had such a crowded time and have been so travelled and entertained that I don't know where to begin to tell you about it. Johannesburg was a great success. We had for hosts a number of the Eckstein group ("Tell 'em your name is Isacky Ikestein, anything else ye like") and we went down a gold mine and into Chinese and Kaffir Compounds, and I had about 800 people at my lectures, mostly *men*, which is a new thing. A keen audience, very quick. On the other hand, at Durban two days ago I had 1200 in the Town Hall and it was all flat and dreadful. Durban is a seaside place, very like Margate, and the fame

of Johannesburg reached it, so they advertised and puffed me and packed the Town Hall with people accustomed only to side shows on the beach. I never had such a job—children, “coloured” women, Parsees, loafers, and mutton-heads of all sorts. Not a smile in them,—a sea of wooden faces. I gazed wildly among them and caught what I took to be a sympathetic expression on a woman’s face (I ought to know better at my age) but just then she yawned! Then I fixed upon a man, and he got up and went out! It was awful. The only thing is that they went on listening more or less, though not a soul understood. It was a punishment for Johannesburg which cracked me to the skies.

Kimberley is a nice little place, and you have no idea how impressive a diamond mine is. Imagine a hole in the ground one mile round or thereabouts and 1000 feet deep. I told the Manager they ought to put up a large slab inscribed “This Hole was dug in honour of Woman’s Beauty.”

They showed us about £100,000 worth of diamonds on a counter. Very trivial they looked; indeed I laughed, which pained the high-priest.

A more interesting thing was the war remains. I have now seen Kimberley and Ladysmith, and all I can say is that there’s no army I ever heard of which, under a decently good commander, wouldn’t have been inside either place in about a week. Both places are a disgrace to the Boers—especially Kimberley with 500 troops and 2000 civilians to defend about 13 miles. The Boers were really afraid of Rhodes. It was difficult to think of him as dead—he lived in the Sanatorium, a very fine bungalow hotel planned by himself. We stayed there and his mark was everywhere. He designed it for about 20 guests only, as a kind of health resort. At Ladysmith we stayed in the rooms occupied by Sir G. White and his staff. At Harrismith we were entertained by the Mayor (who keeps the chief hotel) and he took me up a mountain 8000 feet high, on horseback, where we saw whole villages, so to speak, of baboons, who talked to each other and shouted just like children.

I'm too full of stories to go on. There's a beautiful Hebrew person called Sammy Marks in Johannesburg who was a friend of Kruger, and is now a loyal Britisher. He doesn't believe in politics, he says politics are like love and religion, they don't pay dividends. He said to Abe Bailey, who fancies that the mantle of Cecil Rhodes has fallen upon him, "Mr. Bailey, I've had a lot to do with old clothes, and I give you my word—they never fit."

I'm tired of lecturing but have still Cape Town, Stellenbosch (and Grahamstown). Then home. Oxford about Sept. 29th and Glasgow as soon as I can.

I played Golf at Bloemfontein—the putting greens are made of small loose gravel. I forgot to say the Chinese were all wearing elegant prints that looked just like Thornliebank ones.

#### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Cape Town, 2.ix.07.*

I can't begin to tell you our adventures. You should have seen Lucie shut up in a kind of small dairy with six ostriches and cutting herself feathers to taste with a pair of garden scissors. It is quite safe if they are packed tightish, so that they can't kick. So we fielded them in and shoved them about—they are as heavy as Saratoga trunks.

Also I saw a whole civilisation of baboons when I rode up a mountain. They signalled to each other and quarrelled in loud nasal tones about who we were. I mistook the noise for children.

Since a month ago I have lectured 20 times in all kinds of places. Johannesburg liked me best.

It has all been very woolly and comfortable except for some few patches of cold and dirt here and there. We have been awful well treated, and gradually, by reason of inter-colonial competition (as to who really is most slap-up in culture and care for the higher life), I became a Great Man.

Indeed one chairman called me a Household Word, which, you will notice, is pretty much what Shakespeare is.

TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Cape Town, 4.ix.07.*

In this bare barbarian land there are no books so I send you only a small collection of Shakespearian fancies, interrogative trifles for the youth to spend their wit on.

I have lectured 21 times, no fewer ; 3 more, and I start for home. But it's not so bad as it sounds and we have enjoyed it. Durban (a lovely place) was chosen for my trial as a cheap public speaker. The local secretaries had billed me a foot high like a hair dye or a conjuror and the Town Hall was packed with 1200 people, most of them free-seated, all ignorant, idle and gaping. Mulattos and dagos, children and their nurses, beach-combers and culture-mugs—all were there. They leant back in their chairs wondering when it was going to begin. It never began. But with anger at my heart I made them listen, not by my matter, but by the suppressed fury of my determination to get through my job and not to coquet with them for the favour of their comprehension. They sat stupid, but still, and at the end applauded, chiefly because it was the end, but also, I think, because they believed that something creditable (though very mysterious) was going on. I hope never to see the like again. Johannesburg was very quick in the wits, as might be expected, about 800 mostly box-headed men. But that doesn't matter : we've enjoyed seeing the continent. And the sun every day is a great gift—not in the least too hot. Cool air and warm sunshine all the time.

TO EDEN PHILLPOTTS

*12 Northmoor Road, Oxford,*

*17.12.07.*

A letter like yours is a great pleasure. It's the only praise worth having—praise from members of the craft.

And what you say recalls to me some of my own zest when I wrote the essay. But I've fallen out of love with it lately. I took it up the other day in a house where I was staying and read most of it. I found that I still believe what it says, but that I do not like its manner. When the critics complained of its manner I was impatient of them, but now they are avenged. So I inscribed on the flyleaf my recantation—"This little book is too stuck-up"—and put it back in its place.

Narrative must be the real pleasure—I've done very little of it.

An essayist is like a Chairman, always in evidence, but a story-teller gets his own way, like a sly diplomatic member of the Board, and is amused to see the others get the credit.

I have fallen in love with the simplest way of writing, doing exactly what you want to do, with the phrases of daily life for your sole instrument. The mob of gentlemen who write with ease.

I have known your work for a long time. Not long ago I read aloud (twice) to chosen hearers your story of the bankruptcy of a schoolboy. I shall never cease to like *The Human Boy*. And I have a vague powerful memory, as of a bad dream, of a Devonshire old man pushed down a well, and of the agonies of the sons. So you see, what I feel is that you are doing the real thing, and I am talking about deportment.

All the more your praise is good to have. W. E. Henley (now dead) liked *Style*, and when I said it was juvenile, he replied that most of the good things are, so I daresay it's all right. But I shan't do it again.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

Oxford, 17-xii-07.

I am looking forward to my late tea on Friday week. It's always a fresh and delightful surprise to find that you want me to come.

It *is* funny about preaching. I wrote only yesterday to an old Glasgow student of mine, a good chap, newly ordained. I told him that there is too much preaching in Scotland, that the people who dote on sermons are not much use, and that I hoped he would not indulge them, and so on. No-one else will tell him all this ; and perhaps he will listen to it from me. A Scribe can talk to a Pharisee.

I forgot to tell you, I am off this afternoon to stay with Lord Curzon at Basingstoke. He's the new Chancellor here, and I did all I could to get his rival elected. But he doesn't mind that any more than I do. I think his faithful henchmen bore him most.

To L. R.

*Hackwood, Weds. 18.xii.07.*

I got here all right and found a swift motor to take me from the station. At Oxford Station I saw Heberden and J. A. Smith, in a fur coat, so of course I suspected them of being on the same errand. But no such thing ! Mr. Haldane is the most insignificant man here, next to me. I don't know who all the others are, but I'll tell you what I know. . . .

I wandered into the smoking-places where I found Lord Charles Beresford who shook me long by the hand and said of course he knew me. Obviously he didn't. I sat next to Lady Elcho at dinner with Mr. Evan Charteris on the other side. I like Lady Edward Cecil and another of the women, who is either Lady Ampthill or not. Lord and Lady Ampthill you see are here, but I am not sure which they are. Curzon is very nice and kind, and easy. I live in the East Wing of this huge house. Some hundreds of men are removing a neighbouring hill, to improve the view.

. . . Curzon is in some ways the *best* person here. There's a change for you from first public impression ! You couldn't invent a God that wouldn't have to give him



enormous high marks—for unselfishness, and courage and loving kindness.

Fri. 20. . . . There's no doubt I've had no end of a time. "You're not an Englishman," Lord Chas. Beresford roared at me; "why when you came in yesterday you said you'd had the devil of a time. No Englishman would have said that. So I thought to myself—"Thank God, the fellow's an Irishman." I told him I said "a hell of a fine time", which is just the opposite. His last words to me yesterday were "God save Ireland!"

### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Atheneum Club, 26.12.07.*

I don't know what to write about in this pool of Bethesda for Bishops. . . . In a *Saturday* that I took up . . . for five minutes in a bookshop, I rapidly culled the points of a criticism of me. It is a criticism of me, not of Shakespeare, and I don't think it understands me. Except that, by a true instinct, it discerns that I am an Anti-moralist. But it confuses morals and moralists in the same old fashion as bishops confuse Christianity and Christ. Give me Christ and morals—not Christianity and moralists.

Who is it that lets go? Is it a true instinct that makes some people let go, and others not? I have a kind of feeling that those who let go are those who know that, in the main, they are for creation, not destruction.

### TO LADY BETTY BALFOUR

*Oxford, 23 Jan. 1908.*

I should love to come to your week-end party on the 29th of February, to meet no-one I have not met before,

which is rather a luxurious thing. It will be a great pleasure.

It is pleasant to hear that you liked my book, which I sat down and wrote the minute (so to speak) that I left the party where we met. What with writing the book and correcting the proofs I got so accustomed to it that even now it makes hardly any impression on my mind, but I believe I liked it, too, before it grew up.

I liked your book, I read as much of it as one can read in another house ; but I am going to read it all in my own house. Talk—letters—wild lives—tame lives—that's my order of merit in the first class of literature. Then after these, all the respectable things come along in four-wheelers, the epics, and histories, and critical masterpieces.

I look forward to Woking on Leap Day.

#### TO LADY BETTY BALFOUR

*Oxford, 27. Feb. 1908.*

This codicil revokes my will of this morning. The destination to be the same and the pleasure no less, but the train to arrive at Woking at 4-46.

It will be very delightful, and moreover a real holiday. I have been seeing something of the young lately, and they amaze me, I am sure my generation was not Wise, as they are. They seem to get the hang of things so very early. They are not conceited, or romantic, or theoretic, only wise. Exit Byron, enter Japan. I never saw anything so unlike decadence. But they are so good and so modest that I think they will all die. I hope they won't, for I like them immensely, this is a wonderful place when one gets admission to the places where they are talking to each other and saying what they think.

I must get this posted or my will is uncorrected.

## TO LADY ELCHO

Oxford, 30 Jan. 1908.

Every evening at Hackwood I prepared for a dull evening, as a rest, and I never got it. I had a most intoxicating time—but it wasn't really tiring. It isn't going fast under full sail that tires you, it's steering among shoals and shallows. Every time that you say something and it's taken not as you meant it an hour comes off your life.

So you see I'm not a bit frightened—quite like a lion-tamer. I knew hardly anyone at Hackwood when I went there, and except for the inevitable brief nervous seizure which all lion-tamers have on the threshold, I was quite collected.

## TO H. C. WYLD

Oxford, 30.1.08.

It's quite simple—take it this way. Is there anything that you would like your pupils to know about the English Language before they begin a degree course of any kind? Put it in a book, and there's your *Grammar*. Is there anything I would like them to be practised and informed in before they begin to write essays for me? Put it in a book, and there's my *Composition*. The elementary Science of language, the elementary art of language, that's the idea.

The attraction (I will not deceive you) is money. The Press holds strong views on the possible career of these books. It talks in hundred thousands, from one upwards.

I don't know what's in an ordinary Grammar. I never found anything I wanted to know. But the point is a practical school-book on English Language (Science) and one on English Language (Art). Can it be did? I dunno. If your book were too much unlike the present article it would run a risk of not catching on. If it were too like, you couldn't bear to write it. But the waters are stirred, and there is a chance for something new.

The best way would be for you to get the most popular

present-day English Grammar for Schools (I can't direct you to it), read it, curse and damn a good deal, until you feel tempted just to show them how the study of one's own language ought to begin.

I'm not much attracted to my share in the job ; like you, I have plenty to do. The collaboration attracts me ; so does the money or the chance of it.

I don't know how far Syntax is necessary—I should have to deal with it, in my way. But no doubt you would have to write for those who are not going to make a special study of language. That's your chance, to hit a large public, and to popularize the modern Science of language. I don't see how you could possibly do without *some* history of language. Think it over at leisure, and let me know. . . . It's a swell thing to write a very simple book.

#### TO H. C. WYLD

*Oxford, 6.ii.08.*

. . . It's all right ; I'm glad they've written to you from the Press. We had better talk about it. I can't appropriate the deliberate craft of writing, and say what *ought* to be ;—for the new thing (it's queer it should be new) about my composition is that it, too, tells only what *is*, how it comes about and what its effects are. That's partly why I think it may fit your work.

I'm no use, I think, for kids. Top forms of schools, and Colleges (all subjects) is my game. Don't you think it's rather a new game to treat composition wholly apart from " literature "—the expression of what one means in letter, message, narration, science, etc. ? I don't want the trail of fine writing anywhere.

What'll you do about Parsing and Analysis ? Heave them overboard, I should say.

And Parts of Speech ? Eh ?

You'll have to strike some mechanism for the exposition of live grammar. It can't be *all* history.

I'm not a bit afraid you won't be new. Your danger is making them uneasy, so that they say "It's very interesting, but of course we must learn grammar. Is there a sequel?" As a child of this world I think you should keep some of the rot, and explain it away.

There are no *made* rules in my part. That's what I shall enjoy showing. If English is bad it's for a reason—ambiguous perhaps, or harsh and difficult. But the "society and character" part is what I shall enjoy. Styles are like dialects.

This is only a friendly little note: it has no business.

#### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ashton Keynes, 28.3.08.*

We are going to build a house I think, at North Hinksey. In the two Hinkseys, as dear Matthew Arnold said, nothing stays the same. And the reason (which he did not know) is that the son of his old friend Clough is going to put up some villas. I fear I am too old to build a house. My contemporaries are dying like flies. But it's best to go on till you're stopped. "Too quick despairer," as dear M.A. said, "after lunch comes tea."

So no more at present. I hope Mr. Ker is very well.

#### TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ashton Keynes, 29.3.08.*

This is just to acknowledge your nice letter. My little study here and the spring, favour letter-writing. I even wrote a cynical sonnet yesterday.

(I'm really writing letters.) I'm supposed to be writing a Preface to Johnson's *Shakespeare*.<sup>1</sup> As a work of piety I've collected all the best of the old man's notes on Shake-

<sup>1</sup> *Johnson on Shakespeare.*

speare and have chucked them into a little volume. I love it: hardly any one else will. So I must crack it up in a Preface. It's the same sort of book as Black. I felt bound to do something about Johnson. People can't understand that one should love him. They think he was a social success, or a funny dogmatic old thing. Pigs like Macaulay have done harm. Boswell's not quite guiltless. His aloofness has made Johnson a *curiosity*. No critic speaks of him as a friend. That's monstrous.

Your description of the steam of Spring on the Forest is very hard to bear.

I thought you might like my cynical *Sonnet*.

I never cared for literature as such.

Iambic, dactyl, trochee, anapaest,

Do not excite my interest in the least;

And cultured persons do not please me much.

Great works may be composed in French or Dutch,

Yet my poor happiness is not increased.

To me the learned critic is a beast;

And poetry a decorated crutch.

One book among the rest is dear to me.

'Tis when a man has tired himself in deed

Against the world, and falling back to write

Sated with love, or crazed with vanity,

Bemused with drink, or maimed by Fortune's spite,

Sets down his Paternoster and his Creed.

#### TO HIS SISTER ALICE

*Ashton Keynes [Spring, 1908].*

We are all very well. Philippa wanted Lucie to do something troublesome as part of a game in the garden. Lucie smiled and wouldn't. "Horrible old creature that I live with," said Philip, "why won't you do what I want you to?"

Cecil Rhodes was just the same. He had Harry Cust to stay with him in Rhodesia, for three months. Fresh meat was scarce but one day they got a guinea-fowl. Each had some and there was a bit over which Rhodes pressed upon Cust, who had had enough, and kept on refusing. Then Rhodes said, in a temper, "I wish I had never asked you to come and stay with me if you won't do what I want."

### To L. R.

*Dalnotter, 6.4.08.*

. . . I forgot to say—my pot hat (18/6) is a failure. Nobody likes it. It won't do. It doesn't fit on to the torso. The clothes don't live up to it. It gives a false impression. It won't pack. I never wear it, so I am sure to lose it. It is a failure. They won't take it back, I think. But you must see it. The man said it is "dressy". What dreadful talk tailors and haberdashers do talk!

### TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*May, 1908.*

#### *To E. D.<sup>1</sup>*

The Year that Robert Louis died,  
When I was in my author's pride,  
I wrote in praise of him, and took  
My pleasure in the little book.

Then old things passed, and new things came,  
And still the book remained the same;  
But I was changed, and I confess  
I grew to like it less and less.

How poorly do we make amends  
To constant unregarded friends!  
The faithful book, I little knew,  
Had spoken well of me to you.

<sup>1</sup> Written in a copy of his book on Robert Louis Stevenson.

So now I put it at your will,  
To burn or cherish, save or kill ;  
There's nothing in it *I* would save :  
- But I am keeping what it gave.

To L. R.

*Hackwood, 10.vi.08.*

The usual swift motor whirling me along a mile of road and then up a long avenue of trees. No-one in,—all out on the vast lawn among other trees—and tea was offered me by Thomas Hardy, a gentle, well-dressed, querulous little gentleman (who sits alone under trees correcting his proofs).

. . . After dinner I talked with A. J. B. and Haldane. So different ! Haldane is *arriviste* and worldly—not in the least perceptive : A. J. B. talks just as well about who makes how much money, but his eye gleams at the meaning of it—I mean at a theory, or a piece of irony. So there was a triangular affair. . . .

Altogether I'm on my feet and quite happy. It's a curious kind of Brahminical position—I can say and do what I like, because my mind is pure. It isn't really pure of course, but my position is. There's nothing I can want, or that anyone here can give me, except amusement, and it's a very strong position and full of delight. But it's a very pure society—so pure that it shows up anything not like itself in strong contrast. (It's not so pure as Stanway.) . . .

To JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 1908.*

I hear that I've got to worry along without a Liverpool Honorary degree. This is too bad. They are playing cat and mouse with me. First they would and then they wouldn't. I may say that I don't believe for an instant that the Chancellor's dead. *He's* all right. You see, I know



Mackay. But it's no way to treat an old friend. What am I to say when I'm asked categorically whether I am or am not a Doctor of Letters of Liverpool University? It's devilish awkward. It wouldn't matter so much if I'd never been proposed to, as the young woman said when she found that she wasn't about to become a mother. A man has other things to do than to cudgel his brains writing polite letters to parties called H—— (may his name choke him at the Day of Judgement!) accepting bogus offers of alleged honorary degrees. This sort of thing makes Life a Farce. Egyptian Archaeology may be all very well, but it has a very fish-like smell when it's used as a cover for this sort of thing. R. S. Sievier's in trouble, I see, but at least he didn't offer old Joel an honorary degree. I don't want to make a fuss, but it's not a thing one gent offers to another on no assets. I've been stood drinks I've had to pay for, but damned if I've ever been stood a drink when there wasn't any public house, only a game of catch-as-catch-can among thrifty evangelists committing criminal assaults on their own shadows. "Jo's dead," says they, "so you can go and tickle yourself"—which they call business. It's bound to lose you trade—carrying on like this. I suppose you call your three damn thimbles a University, but the police don't look at it that way. When they ask "Where's the bloody pea" they won't sit down for an hour to listen to a man called Mackay explaining that the Egyptians were an ancient people. They know all about that—having been there—and they can't waste time on a one-horse back-slum fake, with Alexandra Park races to attend to. You'll be up a gum-tree, my boy, before you're much older, if you don't cut loose. The nigger business, to keep the crowd quiet while the shysters get to work, is just about played out. I've seen a poor chap keep on at the bones and *don't you hear de Angels callin'* and the whole God-forsaken programme, while the 'tecs winked at each other and handed round darbies as if it was a afternoon tea party at Marlborough House. However, I say no more. When I want a honorary degree I'll come

and take it—same way as you take a photograph, with nothing but God's daylight and a magnifying glass. It don't matter who you take it off—one cock-eyed fraud's as good as another when Heaven turns on the hose and the band plays to the tune of "*His mother loved him dearly, but he wasn't any use*". And they call it the University of Liverpool—as if that made any difference. However, I say no more. Could you come in August? I do hope so. We shall be at Ashton Keynes almost all August.

So no more at present.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ashton Keynes,  
Cricklade, Wilts,  
16.vii.08.*

You are a learned man, and a rogue, one of the sort of fellows who think they can conduct the business of life on inspirationist principles, and who run an office pretty much the same way as they make love to a woman. So you don't answer letters, not you, except when you've had a drink, and feel like it. I'm not blaming you, being something in the same line myself. But I know you can do a job, if the fancy takes you, and it's not compulsory. So I write to say that the Press wants the Borrow anthology bad. So do I, for I certainly can never read all the maundering of that dreary egotistic humbug. Give us his touches of nature. You can do it on your head; so I hope you'll wade in at once like hell. That's all that the Delegates of the Press asked me to say. Square the cash with Cannan: they'll pay you all right.

As this is a business letter, I omit to add any of those personal communications which are the salt of epistolary commerce. Why should I help to furnish the large and disorderly pocket of your disgraceful coat? Put *Titbits* in it—that requires no answer. Why should I complicate your

already formidable programme for the Day of Judgement, and add another disappointed soul to the weight under which your conscience is groaning like Charon's barge? I'm a clean man of business, I am, so I content myself with tipping you this formal note. Docket it "*Re Borrow*," but keep it out of sight, or it'll frighten the Hebrew financier when he next pays you a visit.

TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Ashton Keynes,  
Cricklade, Wilts,  
22.vii.08.*

*More*, by Max, reminds me of our pleasant lunch, overlooking the Green Park, with the enormously athletic impotent Swiss waiter walking like a managerial bravo among the tables. Did you see, years ago, that Sampson, an excessively strong man that was, was lost in a ship wrecked off Australia. The Psalmist was right about God's attitude to strong men. It's a silly trade.

I liked the treat you arranged for me. Maurice Baring was also at Esher, where we had a very good week-end. Now I am trying to regain my normal state, that is, a very monotonous and simple life, where the laziness is so absolute that at last it becomes excessive, and, there being nothing to think of and nothing to do, some sort of work or interest in books starts up and asserts itself.

I think Lord Wemyss certainly had the *beau rôle* on the Old Age Pensions Bill. I think too that courage would pay if it were more extensively practised.

I hated Max's article on *Going Back to School*. Very honest, but so brutal. And so utterly blind to the meaning of all kinds of asceticism—as if Public Schools were meant to train mischievous, idle art-critics. All the same, I loved Max—and the rascal knows it, and presumes on it.

## TO 'LADY ELCHO

Ashton Keynes,  
Cricklade, Wilts,  
21.viii.08.

I want to hear about America, and whether it's really as awful as they say. A friend of mine strongly advised me not to go there—he said that there are *no real people there* ; and this fitted in with the curious kind of skilful pleasant emptiness that I have found in most Americans. They try so hard ; and do it all so well ; and one doesn't know why. They make me feel that I am a sulky Englishman—whereas many an Englishman makes me feel French. Of course I've only seen them in the shop-window (where they live, a good deal) and have always believed that they're all right in the back-parlour. But they really have not a passion for private life ; and they say things, quite simply, that I always thought were said only by newspapers. "The man that was a newspaper"—he's almost as alarming as a newspaper would be if it began to talk like a real person, intimately and casually.

So the end is that we will polish and consecrate the days I said, because Bushtail hath need of them.

## TO T. C. GOTCH

Ashton Keynes, 31.viii.08.

I was not unprepared to find the Sonnet book a mere tad or craze. It is not that. It is sober and rational in method, and has a good deal of plausibility. What Sadler says is that a rearrangement of the order of the sonnets makes them fall into a regular kind of drama ; suggested to Shakespeare by certain incidents in his life, and that this order is its own proof. Well, some of the sonnets as rearranged by him do fit together better than in the 1609 edition. But the 1609 order, you see, will always be the order in which Shakespeare readers and scholars *must* have

them, for Sadler's order depends on an unverifiable hypothesis. He can't supersede the 1609 edition and order. So his book is a pleasant, interesting and in many ways highly competent piece of speculation or fancy. The least sober part about him, to my mind, is the extravagant value that he attaches to his rearrangement, which even if it could be proved right does not much enhance the poetic value of the component sonnets.

As I told him, I don't find myself convinced, so I don't think I could be god-father to his book. "Here is a theory," I should have to say, "I can't accept it, but I recommend it to others." So I do, in a way, for the book is well worth examining by those who are keen on the Sonnet problem; but such a lukewarm introduction would not do, especially as Sadler calls his find a "discovery", not a "theory". That is where we differ: I stick to "theory".

I should be happy to subscribe to an edition; or if he or you are writing to any publisher whom I know, I would drop him a note. I think the book interesting—but chiefly, I fear, to a very limited public. And think of the mathematical chances against a complete rearrangement for 154 sonnets falling exactly into Shakespeare's order! It's like putting the 1st Scene of *Macbeth* together from the component words. All this I should have to say if I prefaced. But I could honestly tell a publisher that the book doesn't belong to the order of the Baconians or the like; it's an honest attempt, very careful, and subtle, in parts, at critical reconstruction.

#### TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Dalnotter, 13.ix.08.*

I hope you won't let the Duke of Cumberland slide. I should think he's a splendid peg to hang vignettes on. My only complaint of the *Life of Lord Elcho* is that you don't quite let yourself go and put down all that occurs to you by

way of interpretation of the facts. I should like the Life of Cumberland to be written with a fine and quiet disregard of the pomps and pieties. Lost battles and bilked whores make a good background and give the atmosphere. And think how virtues (which I presume he had) shine against that background. Moreover it would be a subtle pleasure to have a picture of the sort of British product (Walpole, Cumberland) that beat the chivalrous Jacobite ideals in their decay.

People *won't* write the books they can—that's what's the matter. They think there's some damned kind of etiquette which they must imitate. "Watch Mr. Gibbon, and do as he does." A great master of the minuet, but I can't read him, the style is so rich and thick, and there's so much of it.

About half the Eighteenth Century could be worked into the Epic of a Blackguard. They were Epical, too.

I'm awfully sorry not to come to Gosford. I regret it deeply already—but it's a clear case, I fear. We had no end of a time at Stanway and stayed up till 3.0 the last night, just to show that quiet home life need not be lacking in spirit.

#### TO LADY ELCHO

*Oxford, 25.xi.08.*

I don't remember having any fireside talk with you in this house, except once, nor in your house while we were there, except once. So many things happen; and nothing is any use at all unless it happens,—which is my creed, and is my shy standing difference with Lady Desborough. I had no end of a good time at dinner: she has a gift of making talk exciting; you can't remember anything you heard or said, but it was all real and delightful. I think when you remember *things said*, it means that the talk had lumps in it and did not go with a rush. The very few times in my life that I have calmly and purposefully said "a good thing", I have always felt like an undertaker bringing in the body.

Then there is a great deal of praise of the dead, and much discomfort.

You see how you have been remembered, or I couldn't start off talking. When I came back here I had no party to take care of, but I had my own sort of housekeeping, and it simply raged. The fact is I am helping to build up a thing called an "English School" and you wouldn't believe how many people have to be conciliated, or threatened, or merely informed. It's all the same as housekeeping, and everyone is a mass of nerves. The people who won't do anything but must be consulted are like the rocks in the stream, they won't move, but you may wreck on them. So far I find the steering quite exciting. And it's true that if you are going rather hard, the rock sometimes gets nervous and bobs. (Of course not if you tilt at it, but if you tilt at your goal and refuse to see it.)

I hope Mr. Balfour will spend most of his time on the Romanes lecture in merely choosing a subject. If you really choose a subject, and are happy about your choice, you've done quite three-quarters of the work. It goes on underground. But it's rather hard on him to have to do this with the Licensing Bill and all blazing away. I think he'd better lecture on *Politics and Art*. I heard only scraps of the conversation at your end, but I am sure he could do this splendidly, and (moreover) I am on his side. I mean, the art of building up the whole fabric of society—a thing you can't see—and how it differs from little tricks of decoration. The coral insect business, sinking yourself for someone unborn to stand on. The faith of it—that good will come, though you can't for the life of you tell how, whereas the craftsman is most dogmatic in telling you exactly how. And the sacrifice is an eternal part of it—it is not an accident liable to happen to successful people, that they fall; it is the price of their success. They must build themselves into the dam—or put their arms into the staples; or kill themselves in the engine-room.

I am sure he could make a splendid thing on *Politics and*

*Art* or that sort of subject—would you get him to think of this? You see, he talked some of it.

Among the things that happened at Stanway was a walk with your adorable Cynthia, which was a kind of rest in the midst of social joys.

You see how long an Epistle, O Timothea, with mine own hand—whereas the Seven Churches of Asia are taking to the type-writer. But I have to lecture to-morrow—which must now be made, the lecture, I mean; to-morrow is in Other Hands.

#### TO C. H. FIRTH

*Oxford, 8.xii.08.*

I have drafted a letter to the Colleges about Tuition, saying only what we have agreed. You shall have a proof. Wright thinks it pressing, because they may be moved to make other arrangements in default of information from us.

I have approached them in humble wise, asking what they are going to do, and suggesting that if they have no other plan, our men are to hand, and efficient.

I feel as if I were on the high road to serious politics, which I take to be a kind of revenge for unnecessary trouble and indignity. The material for making me an anarchist is slowly accumulating. If the English School is smashed by a stampede of the Colleges I shan't write anything at all for Oxford readers, but I shall feel sorely tempted to try something outside. As it is, I should welcome a Commission. Meantime, I try to avoid one.

#### TO CYNTHIA CHARTERIS

*Oxford, 2 Jan. 1909.*

I thought you might like to hear of the game of Thicks, which we have just invented. It can be played as a cure for Bromides. Two people can play the game, but it is



better for four. They must be like a football team, each with a special rôle. There must be more Bromides than Thicks present, or the game is rather cruel.

The first rule is—

1. *Nobody understands anything.*

You will easily see how the whole game develops from this magnificent rule. Properly worked out, it compels the Bromides to go back to the beginning, and so to become interesting. Bromides are dull partly because everyone pretends to understand them. This is cured by the Thicks. The Thicks should be scattered among the Bromides, and should be accustomed to work together so that they can pass the ball.

A very simple example will show how the game is played.

1st Bromide. "What a terrible scene it must have been at the Albert Hall."

1st Thick. "Where is the Albert Hall?"

1st Bromide. "The great suffrage meeting you know, in Kensington."

(If the 1st Bromide is a narrator it will now be necessary to pass the ball, somehow thus—)

1st Thick. "It sounds like the name of a man, doesn't it? I once saw a book by a lady called Victoria Cross."

2nd Thick. "I had an uncle called Herbert, he collected stamps."

2nd Bromide. "How interesting! Was it a valuable collection?"

2nd Thick. "I don't know. I don't know much about him. He collected stamps."

3rd Bromide (*a little irritated*). "What did he do with them when he had collected them?"

2nd Thick. "I don't really know. I think he just collected them. An uncle on my mother's side."

*(The subject is now changed.)*

A bright Bromide requires a dull slow Thick; but a clipped, reflective Bromide, who works in short maxims,

is best tackled by a Thick who goes off at a great pace on his own account. After a little the Bromide is afraid to trust him with a maxim. A good deal of defensive and punitive work is done by the team of Thicks, but they have their kindlier uses. The most skilful kind of game will sometimes lead a Bromide into the paths of interest. The great crime of Bromides is that they are "superior"—they offer stuff that does not interest them as if it were good enough to interest others. They must be brought down from their perch, if you love them, and compelled to talk for their lives, as it were.

The game is quite undeveloped, so I send it to you for a New Year's card, to see if you can do anything with it. I am thinking of drawing up some specimen conversations, to show how the maxim—Bromide and other well marked types are dealt with.

A good team of Thicks can be made of the following numbers: The puzzled Thick; the eager inquisitive Thick; the self-satisfied Thick; the patronising Thick (who must take care to patronise only the most obvious things). These, if they are trained to work together, will be sufficient for 8 Bromides. (Specimen of work done:—)

*Bromide.* "I always think that unless you are interested in other people you cannot be interested in your truest self."

*Patron. Thick.* "Yes, I think, on the whole, that is so."

*Self-satisfied Thick.* "You were saying?"

*Bromide (feeling a little faint).* "I was saying that unless you are interested in other people you can hardly be interested in yourself."

*Puzzled Thick.* "But how can that be? I'm very sure I'm very fond of other people, yet I'm quite interested in myself. I don't see how that can be."

*Eager Thick.* "O, but it's delightful. Do explain more about it. How did you come to think of it? How would it be if you were interested only in *one* other person? Would that be enough? I always think that's the most romantic

thing to be, although of course in these days it's very difficult indeed to know what's romantic and what isn't. Still, I think almost everything is romantic, don't you?"

(This will be enough for the First Round.)

This is a great deal of nonsense, too like the real life that should not come into letters. It's a parlour game, sent only to wish you a happy new year.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey,*

21.V.09.

I am very sorry about your French trip—I hope it will come all right—and am glad not to let our field to the farmer. But the grass is growing and *something* will have to be done. I never knew such a place as the country. It's at it all the time. I have had quite a false impression from the Poets. I thought that one could leave the country alone—that it was Nature, in short, and fit to take care of itself. I now find that it's no such thing, and I am a good deal embarrassed. That's why (in a nervous seizure) I suggested letting.

I can't tell you what a dream it has been since our move a bare week ago. I make Lucie very angry by my superstition: I say (because I feel) that all this delight and pride is first-rate material for Providence to throw down. I like the house so much that I don't feel safe. I can hear the sort of thing that is said at an auction. She says all this is morbid and horrible, and that the house is nice at this moment, and that's all about it, and plenty, too. I say she doesn't like it so much as I do: *vide* Keats, *Ode to Melancholy*.

So we have it, to and fro. We both revel in it; but she hates the skeleton that I don't really mind.

You *must* come and stay. All the menial household now is *Breton*—no English in the house. The terrace is heavenly and good for all hours of the day.



THE HANGINGS, FERRY HINKSEY



TO A. C. BRADLEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 22.v.09.*

While we moved house your book remained in a parcel, and was moved. So I did not know till to-day what I had got. Now we sit on a hill in Berkshire about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Carfax, incredibly distant, seeing Oxford vignetted in a cup. Do come and see us.

Your book is extraordinarily live and interesting. One can't drop it. It's all on real things. Sometimes I think you too subtle—in this sense, that you deal patiently with what has been said about a thing instead of saying what I want you to say, viz., "Damn it, I'll tell you how it is." "Away with you, Mr. Kingsley," was a great sentence of Newman's.

But then you don't get lost in other people's follies; the real thing is still there; so it's only a question of method, and reverence for other's opinions. I think you reverence them too much.

I loved *Keats*, and *Wordsworth*, and *Falstaff*, and, in short, the lot. *Keats* is awfully good. *Wordsworth* is an example of what I said—I feel him to be not sufficiently revered when his critics are revered at all—I mean especially the baa-lamb, sentimental, summer-house, walk-home-after-Church sort of critic. The fact is he went too far to meet his critics himself: we've got to drag him back, not to explain away the rest of the road that lies between him and the cultured suburbs. Not that you can do this: God forbid! You put the old man's wickedness clearer than I've seen it put.

We get on quite well here, in a mist of Reform. We live on sufferance: When Colleges begin to appoint dull conscientious English tutors, we're dead. But, God willing, they won't. Meantime we have kick enough to put up a noble fight.

## TO CYNTHIA CHARTERIS

*London, 7.7.09.*

I have to sit on a Committee in Whitehall all day July 13-17, and if I find the strength given me, I will come along some day after 5.0. By strength I mean courage, not health. A front-door is a repulsive object, especially if you are not much accustomed to dealing with it. It should be handled firmly, like the nettle. "Do not be Corney Grain, nor Uriah Heap, but if you must be one or other, be Corney Grain." (*A Book of Social Philosophy*.) "Visitors should go into a friend's house to picnic, not beg."

"Watching is the death of Society."

"A working imitation of society can be got by pretending not to watch."—But I must not go on writing this book.

Philip said an alarming thing the other day. She asked me, "What's the goodest thing you can do?" I said, "O, I don't know. Put your hands together and say a hymn." She said, "I think the goodest thing you can do is to be happy."

This gave me a kind of a fright.

## TO MISS C. A. KER

*The Athenæum,  
Pall Mall, S.W.  
16.vii.09.*

Philip is at Eastbourne with her retired nursery governess who keeps an Hotel, full of G. Gissing's characters.

I'm up here on a Committee and have been doing a Society Cakewalk. I was introduced to a Mrs. Astor yesterday and was shocked to find that she regarded me as a kind of Diabolo—a new game. But you will be pleased with one real good piece of solid work I did. They put me next to Mrs. Patrick Campbell at dinner. She asked me to recommend good pieces for recitation from Words-

worth. I said she would recite no Wordsworth in my presence. She said fiddlestick-end, she had had £60, the most she ever got for 12 lines, all for reciting, "She dwelt among the untrodden ways." I said such a thing must never happen again. So later on she tried to do it, and I interrupted her, and stopped it. So we shunted her on to Jean Ingelow, which she did very well. Jean Ingelow is *best* recited. When she tried to do Wordsworth I changed all the rhymes and shouted out words like *hell* instead. It's not only the Suffragettes that have principle and courage. I too have not been idle. It's fair to say that Mrs. P. Campbell bore no malice. She's a good woman. When I asked her who she was she said she was a mother-in-law. When I said that didn't tell me much, not being very personal, she said her more intimate life consisted in hating growing old.

This is just a line, so no more at present. G. Macmillan and John Murray are playing billiards downstairs, *not together*. Dog doesn't eat dog.

TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

Craigton,

Fintry, Stirlingshire,

19.ix.09.

There's no use in all this examining. Far better to teach boys (and O' girls) that they must on no account write, that it's sure to be rot, and that we won't look at it unless and until they find a publisher. That would steady them. Then if they want testimonials they might have quite effective ones, *geared down*. "A young man calling himself Mungo MacTosh has assured me that he has attended my lectures, and that he desires worldly success. He is ugly to look at, but I have no reason for thinking him dishonest. I wish he had something to do. He has written nothing on Shakespeare, and can be dismissed, I presume, if he should prove less worthy of commendation in other respects."



TO C. H. FIRTH

*The Hangings,  
Ferry Hinksey, nr. Oxford,  
4.xi.09.*

I am delighted to get your Ballads. Very many thanks.

Now please do make a point of lecturing for us next term. The lists are being made up, and we shan't start without you. We could give you a keen audience. . . .

I don't know if we shall get the Statute, but Bank Holiday on Hampstead Heath is something to look forward to in Congregation.<sup>1</sup> The absurd thing is they pay you to shelve you. So it's all right either way, but I'm getting elderly, and should be glad to know whether I'm a teacher or not so as to order my life according. If the Democracy says I'm not, you may yet see a WORK by me, or a Play.

Meantime I'm glad the fat's in the fire because, like the Sausage in Hans Andersen, I prefer to superintend the cooking by getting into the frying pan.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Oxford, 9.12.09.*

Funny thing the Life Scholarly, as M. Corelli would call it. What I've noticed is that anyone who merely wants money, like business men, is generally very cheery and casual; but if a man doesn't want money, he's the devil and all. Seems as if money were the only thing men are human and modest about. Everything else is religion, or tarred with the same brush. What do you think?

There's a University of Monks in Thibet called *Depung*. It's Oxford over again. The military man says—"we call

<sup>1</sup> The English School Statute came before Congregation on 23rd November, and passed in a crowded house by 117 votes to 65. The largeness of the majority was unexpected, and was admitted to be due to his speech. It was his only speech in Congregation.

the Tibetan 'impossible.' His whole education teaches him to be so, and the more educated he is, the more impossible he becomes. . . . The Lamas are trained to wrangle and dispute and defer and vacillate. . . . The highest degree of their Universities is the *Rabs-jam-pa* (*Verbally overflowing endlessly*). They seem to think that speech was made to evade conclusions."

Isn't that good? There are 8,000 of them, in Colleges, at Depung.

### TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, 14th December, 1909.*

It is late at night, and I have just come back from Magdalen where I have been dining with the monks in a sleepy family way, and Lucie is in London, and I am thinking of that adorable Stanway. I thought of it even more last night when I dined at the Holborn Restaurant with a thing called the Johnson Club, and made a speech, and listened to many. You can't think how coarse the speech-making seemed after our festival of talk. The only decent part of the evening was the end, when my host took me on to the Reform Club with a few others, including H. G. Wells. I had a long talk with him. So far as I remember I was concerned to prove to him that his books do not matter—I mean, that people who read them go to him not to learn about life but to see if *he* knows anything about it. He said that he thought he jogged the young and started them on experiment and taught them zest. He was very honest and I liked him. He is a greedy man: he can't bear to think of anyone having an experience that he does not share. And he is so wrapt up in his experience that he is ridiculously unimaginative. All decent girls think (a little) of what others may be feeling—not so Ann Veronica. The real answer to the book will be written, by H. G. W., when the Socialist babies grow up and rebel—(they *will* rebel; all sons of keen greedy fathers do rebel).

Then we shall have another book, the other way round, with stupid sons instead of stupid fathers.

I didn't tell him all this, but we had some very frank talk. I told him some things about himself which were near enough to the truth to excite him.

Yet somehow it was all rather metallic. What a miracle of coincidences goes to good talk! Enjoyment, sympathy, curiosity, courage, reverence, freedom. I wonder it ever happens. Either we don't want to know about those we love, or we don't love those we want to know about. Stanley geared up my Standard, so that a public dinner was almost impossible. I almost made a vow to dedicate myself wholly to private life.

I settled that Mr. Wells wouldn't do for me at all if it were not for his entire honesty. That does more than save him, it makes him fascinating.

He wants honesty between men and women—just as George Meredith does—but he doesn't seem prepared to pay anything for it. Perhaps none of us are.

### TO MISS C. A. KER

*The Hangings,  
Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,  
24.12.09.*

Things happen<sup>1</sup> and change so fast that I can't get back to Wednesday morning when a telegram came at the first light. . . . Arthur had twenty-one years in India, and I think many a man of sixty might covet his life. He was at the top of his form, and they gave him the worst district. He was pleased when he wrote last; he had held durbars, and seen a great deal of the natives, and

<sup>1</sup> His brother-in-law, A. M. T. Jackson, Collector at Nassik, was shot dead on Dec. 21, 1909, as he was entering a Native theatre in that city, to witness the performance of a Hindoo Play given in his honour on his appointment to the Collectorship of Bombay.

things were improving. But of course no political causes could affect the mesmerised rabbit who killed him. It's not a human sort of thing, but a sort of tidal course. I wish I were Governor of Bombay for a year. I would fine a district for every crime, and put in another man at once to do what the last did. Quiet matter-of-fact money exactions are what would do it. We are melodramatic and humanitarian—that's what will finish us if we fail. "We must not hurt the *innocent* people"—and so on.

There's now no one but Lucie of her generation, so to say. But I think perhaps it's all right. It's rather luxurious to ask for more value in a life than there was in Arthur's. It's true it leaves a cruel gap: his wife and his mother simply depended on him.

#### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 28-xii-09.*

It was sweet of you to write—I expect our notes crossed. Lucie is all right I think, but very very tired. She never flinched after about one minute. She had her mother to see to, and the kids go on resolutely being happy, which is a help. But it was her last brother, so to say, and he was well and competent and meant to come and live here in a few years, so he was rather counted on, especially by his mother. That can't be helped; he had a life as long as the average, and much more useful. Lucie and he were kind of friends, very thick, who liked being together. I suppose there's a plan in it all, but it looks like a damned cock-eyed pattern, seen from this end (—which it can't be).

It's a tonic to think of India. They live campaigning there, it's all touch and go, and the funerals are like battle-field ones. We need a lot more of it, instead of those idiotic and disgusting vote-women.

Mrs. — called to-day very sweet and kind. I was beyond caring, so I told her what I thought about her

suffrage. She had never heard it before, I think, though every cabman thinks it. It did her good, for I like her, so there was nothing nasty.

O dear me, as the Guards say. I wish we could come to Dalnotter—it would be like a *bath*. But we can't.

#### TO CYNTHIA CHARTERIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 10.11.10.*

. . . I am a Man of Letters, so I have to write letters to be the ones that I am a man of. I do want to say that Americans are quite incredible. We went to a Thanksgiving Day where they were all together and spoke to each other. It was the queerest feeling. They don't seem to have any private life. Yesterday

I blinked on my perch like a vulture,  
When they crept up the hill unawares,  
To talk of the progress of culture  
And deposit their bodies in chairs.

I wish I loved them better, which I can't do while they stay so husky. They are so bright and snappy—the click without the spark. And O, how they do explain! Lucie says that when you travel from Scotland everyone explains things till you get south of Birmingham, and then it all stops and you rest. I suppose the English are the only race who don't explain.

#### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*11.4.10.*

I loved being at Dalnotter, but was sadder than of old. I'm not sure whether this was my mood, or whether I caught it. What do you think? As conductor of the orchestra you must know when anybody gets behind the music, or plays discords. But perhaps it was a Pathetic Symphony, well executed.

## TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 18.iv.10.*

Shall I tell you about the Hangings? It is quite fascinating, and I am almost out of the trade of letters. The Breton and Bretonne are leaving to-day after giving us a dramatic sort of life for a year, with jealousy, arrogance, doggy faithfulness, suspicion of others, and what not. Also really vile cooking. We are now going to have a stolid Englishman.

This morning when I was in my bath a hay merchant came to buy my (coarse) hay. Being new to the trade, I expected £40 for 18 tons. He punched it and tested it and offered about £3 less than it cost to make. It is mouldy, it seems, all through. The first year of an amateur farmer. I am out after the farmer who made it, to get a little more, if possible.

Tine is going up the Danube to Roumania. His letters read like a Society novel. "Mrs. Tancred and Kitty came on board to tea; it was rather fun." I can't explain this, but it is perhaps clear; Lucie seems to think that it explains itself. He has won a rifle-competition and is sending Miss Muir a pair of gloves out of the proceeds.

Hilary is at home. His reports blackguard him with some passion—adding conduct excellent. But "conduct" at Clifton is 1/10th of life. He takes no interest in what they tell him. I don't know them, so can't intervene. He seems to me to be intelligent.

Adrian is just as he was. He knows the house, and the temper-barometer, and the neighbours, best of all, of course. He can even tell you a farmer's secret motives, quite truly.

Philip is wild and well, perhaps a trifle too haughty. A high hand. I can't see her a sweet serviceable girl of twenty. If she has wits enough, she'll tame; if not, she's no worse off than most of the race. It's brain we seem to lack.

All this chatter is because I think you'd like to get away from your nurse.

I am Clark Lecturer at Cambridge next year, which will compel me to go on with my grisly trade.

### TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, 17 May 1910.*

I have been thinking about education a good deal lately. All the stupid men we see—where do they come from? I have found out. They are *the bright boys*. They carry it off splendidly, while the tests are artificial, made by schoolmasters, most of whom, like Uncle Gregory, are twelve years old. Then, human life being a real thing, they begin to lose ground. They get the Scholarships, and the Entrance to everywhere, and are the joy of their parents and masters. But they can't follow through. Each generation is conquered anew by the people who have the odds against them.

I think this is true. I wish I knew what Mr. Balfour thinks.

We had a good time, and good talks, hadn't we? What if Heaven is nothing but a little chair-trap? It would be all right.

### TO A. J. BALFOUR

*Ferry Hinksey, 18.5.10.*

I was reading your lecture to-day, and it seemed to me to fit in with an old fancy of mine, that the "life" of a work of art is like any other life, determined by "vitality" and unknown laws. It is the vital pleasures alone that count. (It's very like love.) Ten people care for a book—but they are apostles. A thousand enjoy another book, but when they have sucked it on a hot afternoon, they have finished. It is really a problem of generation. Is your pleasure a cause or a consequence? I think your parallel with love is not an analogy, but an identity. The relation of an author to his book is simple paternity.

What confuses the issue is the "success" of books—the crowd shouting after the chariot, with no part in the real campaign. If the only people reckoned were those to whom the book, or picture, were part of their vital history, the thing would be clear. Hence I don't really believe much in the art criticism of those who don't know how to handle a brush.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, July 22, 1910.*

*Re Doggy*

I never thought I should like a Dog, but I like this one, through him being so human, though also bad, for he won't learn to obey or to follow or to come when called, him being of an independent nature and belonging to a child which is a very uncertain kind of education for dogs or anyone else. It's through writing a book that I've got into the way of these long sentences, it being about Johnson, with a view to bring that old man into favour as an author to be read, and in autumn a copy of it will be coming along to Mr. Ker, who I hope will like it, because it is not new-fangled or nonsensical but just true.

Kind beasts just pour in from you—Buttercup neighs and gallops in the field, and we are expecting Regent. Meantime Dyer (who gardens) duns us about Bees, and Hens. I suppose it's very donnish, but I'm going to be a little nervous about all this *life*. Me who spend hours keeping flies out of my study. Still I suppose we all belong to the Organic Kingdom and should be loyal to our billet.

I belong to an Academy,<sup>1</sup> having just proved that an Academy is silly in my last essay on Johnson now in the press.

<sup>1</sup> The Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature.



## TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 7. ix. 10.*

I take some credit to myself that I carefully laid aside these papers, and did not disturb the holy calm of Belgium. For one thing they looked as if you would be better without them—unless you were really to miss them. Your letter is a pain to me; it reminds me that this Godforsaken flea-bitten work of popular culture has got to begin all over again, as the monkey said when they told him to *get up on the organ*.

I put in three weeks when you left, and vamped up a book.<sup>1</sup> A pure fake, odds and ends, all sausage and string. Now I am giving some rather hard and continuous thought to the binding. The Press thinks it can produce a binding which shall look like a guarantee that every word written is a distillation of pure wisdom, scented with research. I am awfully glad to see them so much in earnest about it. Like all hard thinkers, they started with the elements of the problem. Who is to give five bob for bits of Boswell quoted out of their proper order? How is he to be induced to do it? They got right on the point at once, and are working at it like mad. I tell you about it, because you have had the same trouble, how to make people pay you for what doesn't belong to you and what, if they only knew it, is already on their shelves. The idea now is that the binding gambit promises the strongest results.

## TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 Sept. 1910.*

We were so sorry not to be at Cynthia's wedding. I was at the Home Office on a Committee preparing a report on Prisoners' Books (*it is an odd world*) and the Committee threatened to adjourn if I left, which would have caused trouble.

<sup>1</sup> *Six Essays on Johnson.*

I am going to send you a book by me soon, on Johnson. I don't suppose you'll read it, but one must not enquire too curiously into the use made of a present. It's as a present, not as a book, that I send it. That's why I'm shy of sending it, for instance, to Mr. Balfour—people think you want them to sit down at once and be lectured. But *I* don't read so much as I write ; much more, therefore—if I had access to all the talk you hear, I think I should never read at all. It's a makeshift for the lonely.

We have been in Switzerland, of all places ! It was very ugly and very healthy. We liked it.

This Life is so busy that one can't see people, and one can't even *keep on* thinking of them. However, you are commemorated in little flitting thoughts far oftener than you know. A swarm of butterflies, gleaming and fluttering in your honour. Hence this letter ; which, like a butterfly, has no purpose and does no work.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, 3.9.10.*

. . . Poor old Johnson appears on the 8th. Since I wrote him I've been looking into the subject and have found out a lot of things that would have made my work much brighter. But it can't be helped ; I just took what I had at the time.

P.S. Philip sometimes reminds me of you. She has a certain haughty delicate vein that's very like. She'll be a magnificent creature if she's spared.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 10 Sept., 1910.*

I am relieved to hear the books are all right. So that's the end of Johnson.

I wish you would get  
*Miss Burney's Diary* (begin at the beginning and read  
a year or two of it).

Mrs. Thrale's *Anecdotes of Johnson* (in the first volume  
of the *Miscellanies* which you have just sent back).  
*Boswell*—(reading all the parts about Mrs. Thrale).

and *THEN*

tell me what you think of Mrs. Thrale. There's a difference of opinion about her. The question of her true inwardness is not discussed by me in my forthcoming volume ; I just speak kindly of her like an uncle.

My book is here in proof. I can't read it ; it's so dull. I read some of Miss Burney's diary, all about real live people and their ways, after which I felt quite sick at my own so called critical stuff.

You must tell me what you think of Mrs. Thrale. Miss Burney is enthusiastic about her, but they say that Miss Burney was obviously very much "made of" there.

. . . The heavenly thing about Switzerland is the air and the exhilaration. If it were relaxing and melancholy in climate everyone would see how ugly it is. The Clyde is twenty times more beautiful.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, 16.9.10.*

. . . My post is the burning deck till Sept. 29 or so. I would give £100 down to lecture not at all this year. Unfortunately they are asking £900, so I see no chance of a deal. But I shall indicate my opinion of their unreasonable conduct by lecturing very bad. To Dons, largely. At Cambridge, I mean. Dons. Lecturing to them. But I am, I hope, a bright cheerful soul, and I shall hope for the best. Perhaps they won't all be flea-bitten and sniffy. Little bits of luck sometimes wander into our ancient Universities. You never can tell. . . .

## TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 16 Sept. 1910.*

I took most of your suggestions you'll see—and jolly thankful. My wife says that if an ordinary well educated woman were left alone with the book in a railway carriage, it wouldn't take her half a minute to find out that she couldn't possibly read it, and even if the journey lasted eight hours she wouldn't try twice. This was a facer, so I asked why. The reasons are—

(i) There are too many prig words.

(ii) When you get to the end of a sentence you've mostly forgotten what the beginning was about.

I believe this is correct. What am I to do to be popular, now that the bottom's out of transcribing Boswell?

My own belief is that there's only one popular English. It's not spoken by anyone. But it's the English that women think men ought to write love-letters in. You see it in feuilletons. It's bloody difficult to ram old Johnson into it, but I think perhaps I ought to try, and that's what makes me not so bright as usual. I feel distinctly aggravated at being reluctantly driven to have recourse to this expedient. There—I shall fetch it presently.

P.S. *On Publishers.*

Though small the chance of earthly bliss,  
And earthly trouble is sure,  
I'll teach how poor a thing it is  
To be a pubblishure.

P.S. *On Personal Dignity.*

Can dignity and intelligence lie down together? the intelligent people that I have seen being dignified were mostly acting. When I'm dignified I'm acting. Every creature at bay, however, is dignified. Dignity as she is practised in everyday affairs always seems to me to be a tragic means to a comic end. Intelligence is often dignified

by virtue of sympathy with some other nature. Some people become dignified by acting themselves.

This subject is too long. You hate a man who makes grimaces when he fights or when he begets his kind. But talk can't be dignified to be any good, can it? The interchange of sentiments, like exchanging cards, a kind of pot-bellied talk, has dignity because it doesn't do the right work of talk.

*Explicit sermo De Dignitate.*

P.S. *On Welsh.*

I can't write Welsh, so this has to go to Liverpool.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 11th Oct. 1910.*

If I don't be writing to you now, Lady of the House, I never will at all, for I'm in the black trouble of business and the young men to be taught, and you laughing at it all in the banqueting-house on the hill-top.

I was glad I came home, for there's a deal to be done in this world, Lady of the House. So I'm glad I got up early and did be watching the beautiful young girl with the red glint in her hair, and she washing the steps.

I was worse when I got home, because of the stations and the long day, but I'm all right this morning, and fit to call a blessing down on your kind house.

I see that Synge's collected works are to come out in four volumes.

Everyone here is all right. O why can't I lead a golden life like Christabel, and be idle all day!

TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 Oct. 1910.*

Quite by accident, for the dress and purpose repelled me, I took up your three plays<sup>1</sup> and had a read at them.

<sup>1</sup> *Three Plays of Shakespeare*, edited by G. S. Gordon.

I was delighted with them. The prefaces are first-rate reading. I am really ashamed that they should be in Eton collar and jacket while the same thing about Johnson is dressed like a Lord Mayor. It made me feel a snob.

It's the best thing I've seen for Schools. It won't do as a model, for I can imagine the dreariness of the discussion of Shakespeare's construction by Percy Tweedlepippin, B.A., of the Lower Normal College for the Blind. But really your essays are an independent Work.

I'm awfully sorry it never happened that you and I discussed *Ducdame*. I hold, with John Sampson, that it has been brilliantly and exactly explained—first-born and all.<sup>1</sup> The neatest thing I know in Shakespeare illustration. But it may take 20 years to get into the books from the obscure publication where it appeared, so I am sorry it missed a chance. It was by inadvertence that I didn't shove it into my essay—I meant to, but I took things as they came, and forgot.

I'm glad you like Johnson. I meant to send you a copy, and now am glad I was slack, for one reads acknowledgment and criticisms with a perfectly sceptical eye. There's not much in the book except enjoyment of Johnson, but I will maintain that there's more of that than in any funny man that ever birrelled. Even Leslie Stephen is not clear of taint; one almost hears him say, "And now I will show you my performing rhinoceros." I will dine on Wednesday, if I can.

TO C. H. FIRTH

Magdalen College, Oxford,  
15 Nov., 1910.

Your Broadsheet on B (1) is ripping. Who wrote it? It's a swell piece of work.

They're going to spill the Greek statute I hear. Gilbert

<sup>1</sup> See p. 162, note. The article in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* also explained the obscure allusion to the first-born of Egypt in the same scene of *As You Like It*.

Murray, like a garrulous passenger in a broken-down motor-car, is prepared to explain his views on the traffic, but not to collaborate with anyone, except perhaps with that facetious thinker, the Master of Balliol.

I wish I could see you.

### TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 24.xii.10.*

I sat down and read Thomas <sup>1</sup> at once. It is very jolly, I can tell you, to get a little book of verse privately printed and *not illiterate* ! I found out a lot of things from it, too. One thing—why is any Swinburnian metre the negation of all that is shy, mysterious, fairy ? *It is*. Just loud lewd lyric in the Phrygian mode. Also I spotted your most influential poets, Shelley, Milton, Swinburne—in that order ? You profess a love for Romance, my boy, but your speech betrays you. Your Romance is the accumulated glories of poetic tradition. Thomas simply wallows in them. You practise mesmerism by catalogue in the best epic manner. And the Faerie Queene talks in stichomyth. (Not but what poor old Scotland gets a look in.) I think some of the Shelley vein awful good.

Bristol is a fine hell-broth, of high passions and low men. Chorus of Incompetent Devils. Conjuring tricks by Welsh Principal. Drums of Council drumming out Professors. The Devils believe and tremble. Solo on the Spleen by former member of Staff. Short quavering lyric (soprano) by aspiring student, seeking knowledge—interrupted by Chorus of Incompetent Devils determined to Profess.

I have no opinion. Mackay is organising a Fiery Cross on constitutional grounds. But if you ask me whether the Welsh are or are not taking too conspicuous a part (with their conforming tact and nonconforming gush) in English affairs ; in my humble belief—they are. I'd rather be governed by a sot than by an emotional dapper-wit.

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas the Rhymer*, by W. Macneile Dixon.

## TO MRS. F. GOTCH

*Ferry Hinksey, 5 Feb. 1911.*

Philip has just written a letter to Adrian, who is in quarantine. I offer your daughters a Handsome Prize to guess how she spells the following words

1. Bicycle
2. Able
3. Jimmy

Twelve guesses (four each person) are allowed if they consult. If they don't consult, they may have twelve each. Success with any one of the words will be rewarded. I ought to say that all the spellings seem to me perfectly possible, I mean letters like *K* and *S* don't occur in *Able* as spelt by Philip.

The Prize for success with this word *Able* will be larger than the others, for Philip's spelling of it is something of a *tour-de-force*.

I thought perhaps you might like a competition now that the blessed season of Lent is approaching, as the Bishops say. Why do they use words like *Manifold* in ordinary letters? I suppose it's an illusion or a prejudice, but they do seem to me to be the most impossible crew. Winchester on his gout, London on marriage, Canterbury asking for subscriptions, all in a language that is like a bad dream. Well, well, they're more like a fairy story than most things. Grimm's Goblins.

## TO MRS. F. GOTCH

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 Feb. 1911.*

The correct answer is

Gimi.  
bisicool.  
ebooll.



The nearest approach to success falls to *bisicol* (Miss Nancy Gotch). For this a certificate of Merit and a Consolation prize will be awarded.

The correct spelling of *Louise* is Loowes. (For advanced classes only.)

I have to go to Cambridge to speak, at a dinner, in favour of Charles Lamb—quite impossible, without guying the diners, which I suppose I shall do. Do no more till I get back.

There are heavenly wild beasts in Gloucester Green. Go to-morrow (Saturday) evening. A Splendid various lot. Lots of room. You can buy biscuits to feed them. They are at 3.30, 7.0, 9.0. Men go into all cages, but they're best just to feed.

TO J. M. MACKAY

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 June, 1911.*

They have gone and put me on a Committee for the advising on the distribution of the Treasury swag. I screamed and kicked, but they got me. Now will you let me have your views on the points you think most important? We have one meeting on Monday, but the job falls to be done in the autumn. So do post me up. In the name of all the Faculties and Deans of Faculties I adjure you!

I wish we could see you.

TO J. M. MACKAY

*Ferry Hinksey, 19 June, 1911.*

Delighted to get your letter just as I come back from the first meeting. I am pleased with the Comm<sup>ee</sup>. McCormick, who is Chairman, has the right ideas, and I hope the money will serve as a lever to get things into better shape. We shall ask, I hope, for returns on the *tenure* of every pro-

fessor and lecturer, and on the amount of external examination work done by the staff. This sounds inquisitorial, but is meant only to help.

The pensions business is already deep rooted in McCormick's mind.

Sir A. Rucker seems to me a quiet sensible practical man.

I hope to be at the Kuno dinner on July 5—till when adieu. It will be jolly to see you. I should never have gone on this beastly Committee if I had not thought that perhaps it is a debt I owe to you, for my education. Anyhow God bless you!

#### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 21 June, 1911.*

The subject of knighthood is very easily exhausted. I have written about 20 bleats and 30 epigrams on it and I'm unnaturally offended against it if I can carry on. When it's all over I've got to sit here, same as before, wondering if it would be a good day to open a bottle of cheap claret.

I tried to get off, but soon saw that that meant more fuss rather than less.

Will you come to Kuno's dinner?

#### TO OLIVER ELTON

*The Hangings,*

*Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*

*21 June, 1911.*

I did like getting your letter. I have felt Boyce's death<sup>1</sup> a good deal, not that I did not expect it, but they went and printed a photograph of him exactly as he was when he came to Liverpool—keen, tense, with a wistful, childish look, a beautiful face rather—and I seemed to hear him

<sup>1</sup> Sir Rubert Boyce, Professor of Pathology at Liverpool University.

saying, "There's no two ways about it," which was as much as he would argue.

My decoration is due, I suppose, not a little to my having been dragged into Public Committees and the like. I have criticised this in others, but I didn't know how hard it is to refuse. The immediate utility (in a thing one cares about) is there, and it takes a monstrous act of faith to believe more in sitting alone. I'm glad I went (very reluctantly) on to the University-Grants Committee. I liked the first meeting. McCormick, who is Chairman, seems to me to be all right on essentials, and I'm glad to back him. We can't dragoon anyone, but we can reward the higher work—at least I hope so. It's funny how often Liverpool is quoted as a bright example.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 June, 1911.*

I have written 60 letters or notes, and now I must take a holiday by writing this evening only to people that I love. I half wrote to you some weeks ago and then didn't. Something or other happened, and I couldn't *put myself under*, so to say, and get near to where you were. All I could remember was no comfort; it was how, when my mother died, the grief slowly increased till, three years later, I felt I could hardly bear it. At the time I had chiefly a lost, unprotected sense, as if one daren't go to sleep in the house. All this, I daresay, is wrong; and there are moments when one seems to see the plan, and accept it quite simply. Anyhow, one must carry on, and it's not for long. The fire catches new bits of fuel, and the blossom is eternal. Moreover, for a last reach of optimism, in the old and the dying there is often a kind of flame of joy, though it has less to do with sense and more with thought. They see, and are glad. God bless them.

I'm so tired of my Kthood, as a topic, that I can't say any-

thing. It's awful fun guying it with Hilary and Adrian, who bubble with delight at larks extracted from it. I've made a lot of epigrams, but I forget them. The boys are very keen on the precedence of their mother over Wives of Canons. This not for dignity, but for sport. They are devising all kinds of fables of rivalry.

I amusé, or rather amused myself (for all things have an end) with theories of the Cause.

It's like the Emperor's New Clothes. Only that doesn't get the queerness—it's a purely negative satire. The funny thing is that people come out with tears of affection, so to say, in their eyes, say how lovely your clothes are and how excited they feel about them. Simple, unselfish people do this, quite exactly. Who says the Age of Chivalry is dead? How absurd!

This is only the signature over here. Excuse phonetic spelling

W. Ralli  
*Nit*

I have a terrible job before me; letters and letters!

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 23.vi.11.*

All the old fossils of my buried life are crawling out with notes and telegrams. I shall answer them all, but two days have produced a fortnight's work.

I think it was really better to get a pension and to be obscure, in private life, and to write satires freely. (Dryden and Spenser, better than Scott and Tennyson.) Still I do enjoy knocking against the engineers of this world, and explaining to them their errors, and being corruptly knighted by them. I think I rather pained your namesake by telling her that I thought it more amiable to be a kitt (i.e. a Kt.) than a prig (i.e. one who refuses to be a Kt.). She has a kind heart.

The letters *are* amusing. The earliest batch was from people who write to all newly kitted people whom they have ever been in the room with. But some were from old forgotten corners. I've just got to write and write.

TO W. ROTHENSTEIN

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 June, 1911.*

A day or two ago you would have had a long talkative letter, but now I can hardly write for an aching hand. But a thousand thanks! I sometimes feel as if I were the dupe of the moneyed classes. I need money; I get honour (is it?). And I have to pay money to a tailor to get it. It's too witty to be their design, I think. They fool me, and make me pay to be fooled. Of course they know it's their money I want. I could get honour for myself. They are as dull as I am poor. What if I satirise them without wit?

I could have some fun, I daresay, if I had leisure.

I wonder when we shall meet. Our best wishes.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 30th June, 1911.*

I must write to say how much I like Walter's kind thought—a party of all the Knights of Glasgow to meet me (so Mr. Dixon says) with Baillies, Professors, and M.V.O.'s (4th Grade) asked to the At Home after dinner. You'll see how naturally I take to my trade. I have got some knee-breeches a' purpose.

I have to go off in an hour or two to meet the King at Downing Street. (Nothing to do with the Kt.hood.) I don't like it, because there'll be no one to compare notes with, which makes it lonely work.

Harry Cust has a new game called "Boring the Bore." He does it by flat long interminable reminiscences of his

childhood, till even the Bore screams. We will play it—if you can find a Bore. There are one or two here in Oxford, but it would be expensive to bring them, and I thought perhaps you might enquire for one locally.

TO W. H. MACAULAY

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 July, 1911.*

Knighthood is like a bereavement, all very well for a week, but tedious as a fixture. But I'm very busy, and very lazy, and I can't help it—what people call me. I understand there are no duties (I asked about this).

I couldn't go to the dinner <sup>1</sup> because I was bidden to dine to meet the King. This sounded so very worldly that I felt it better not to write in excuse, for the younger brethren, full of the Milk of the Word, are quite intolerant of the World.

TO D. S. MACCOLL

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 July, 1911.*

It's not so bad as I thought it would be. I wish you had seen the 50 Kts. George Alexander alone looked the part. I'm jolly glad about Sidney Lee; . . . he's had no other recognition for a big public job well done. . . . The other box-headed men were a queer collection. It's over now, and we've all got to try to make the title pay for our clothes. I fear I shall come out rather low in this competition.

TO L. R.

*off Ushant, Tuesday,  
Aug. 8, 11.0 a.m.*

. . . We<sup>2</sup> have only been in port for an hour or two at Cherbourg and a short night at Guernsey. All the rest of

<sup>1</sup> Dinner of the Cambridge "Apostles."

<sup>2</sup> He was yachting with Sir Hubert Parry.

the time sailing to get to Ushant, which is now in sight. The winds have been contrary or none at all. Twice we have bathed from the ship at noon with the sails all a flopping. All the time there's a great heasy oasy in from the Atlantic, but now at last the table keeps fairly still, so I write.

We are going to St. Nazaire at the mouth of the Loire and then forty miles, by land, up to Nantes. It will be easier getting home, for the prevailing winds are mostly S.W. No good sending letters; you see I'm not in command, and I can't say we must go anywhere. Also new things come into people's heads. The skipper was very nervous about going so close to Sark to land us at the bottom of a ladder from a small boat, so he stood off when we came back, and we had to row miles on a Cornish kind of Sea, in a tiny boat.

I remember 26th August and hope to be back early that week. But if winds is awful I could always land at Southampton or somewhere and go straight to Picket Post, wiring you. If you don't see me by the Friday you'll probably get a wire. But that's only if winds is steady N. or N.E. I'm aiming at long before that.

I wonder if the Balfours came. I forgot to recommend *Port*. Did you have it?

There's nothing to do all day and the weather's perfect. I'm very brown and red. I shall send this off from St. Nazaire in a day (or two or three) and write a postcard up to date. . . .

To L. R.

*Nantes, 10 Aug. 1911.*

. . . We telegraphed yesterday from Quimper to St. Nazaire to have letters sent on here, and nothing arrived for nobody, which is a kind of comfort, for we hope for them to-morrow. This is late at night in a lovely comfy hotel, with tap basins and everything. We have got the *Daily Mail* mostly (it goes all over the continent) and we know that fur is flying, but we can't hear about anything *private*.

It's a success, this trip, though the travelling is too much. I made them stop at Auray for 4 hours at midday to-day to visit Carnac where there are 1,500 monoliths. It's very impressive; Pearsall Smith said he grovelled before *stones*, and Hubert Parry seemed to feel the same way. Stones have a kind of horror, like priests. I'm sure they were put up to frighten people (who were also knifed on them).

I like H.P.; he's jolly and ordinary, rather like W—C—, and all his art, which is very delicate and subtle, is culture, I'll bet. But he's magnanimous and rolling, and Etonian, and all right.

. . . I am writing with P.S.'s pen, and have just found out how to work it. He is awful good company, chock full of gossip. O my! he made me buy a story of Balzac called *Le Curé de Tours*, with a few remarks on old maids more searching and cruel and true than could be written in English. No suffragette movement in France could escape being stupid, with minds like Balzac at work.

Love to Tine. I hate being hung up here. Sir Hubert is a great boy, and is enjoying himself, I do think. He's most awful nice to us. . . .

Now listen. We go to Tours to-morrow. Then Blois, then I think Angers on the way back, then back to Douar-nenez, where the ship is. We shall sail on the 16th if I can manage it. Home perhaps on 21 or 22. It seems to be Plymouth we shall be shot at. . . .

To L. R.

*Hotel de l'Univers, Tours,*

*Aug. 11, 1911 (late at night).*

. . . Here we are, trapsed off on a continental trip. Sir Hubert (of course) is bored with his yacht, but adores to travel about the Continent, tourist fashion, if only he can get company with him. We had to come here 1st Class to-day from Nantes, by a *rapide*, and here we are, after a struggle, in the best hotel, very comfortable and pretty, but



full of Americans. Pearsall Smith *never speaks* to any American—he can't abide them. So we are to have a motor to Blois to-morrow about 80 miles.

It would puzzle and pain Sir Hubert too much to fight him, though we did take him 3rd class once, and gave him a 2f. déjeuner (awfully good) at Carnac. The worst of it is he's not at all stupid, so he has to be carefully treated. . . .

To L. R.

*Hotel de l'Univers, Tours,  
Sat. night, Aug. 12, 1911.*

. . . We have been the longest scooty motor drive to Amboise and Blois (both splendid royal castles on the Loire) in heat that scorched your face. A tyre cracked, so we sat with our feet in the Loire while it was mended. The river (very fine and hard and sandy) goes all the way with the road.

I forgot to say I have heard nothing, except three newspapers sent on from St. Nazaire. . . . We want to go back, but Sir Hubert is determined to see Loches and other places where Louis XI kept cardinals in cages. So we go to Nantes on Monday, and Douarnenez on Tuesday. To-morrow I s'pose we motor. I'm bored with the heat and no sea, but Sir Hubert already is feeling very guilty and apologetic so we can't say much. It does him no good; he has a heart and no particular digestion, and was ill to-day, but determined to carry on.

The old castles were very real and wonderful, tyrannising their towns. The cafés in the evening are nice, but I just put in the time. . . .

To L. R.

*Sunday night, Aug. 13, 1911.*

. . . It was such a relief getting two letters here (Nantes, Hotel de France)—it has made all the difference in the world,

for I had not had a word. Now I am all right. We are a day too early, but Sir Hubert has *cracked up* and is lying in bed next door. He is about 3 years old, and ought never to have gone scooting about France in the worst month. So now he's all for getting back to the boat, but it is 10 hours railway (and then the boat is at the bottom of an impossible bay with the wind always in through a bottle-neck.) We hope to start to-morrow 9.50 and reach Douarnenez 6.40.

The wonder is that he's alive. Now I know him, I should simply refuse half his plans. He likes to boast of danger and risk, which the skipper won't take and he will, but meantime the skipper is making it all as safe as he can, so Sir H. has his glory, and the skipper is a discredited man, and Sir H. is alive. . . .

I can't help thinking how much you would like this town, all family life and vice and frogginess. Sir H. is really pretty bad, heart and guts. I felt his pulse, and I don't think it's serious, but it's the deuce, all the same. He's sweet, kind, friendly, amiable, and quite unfit to be loose. If you mention that there's a crab and that crab is nice he buys a larger one to out-eat you, him being at death's door. Of course spirit does help to save him. . . .

Goodbye. We hope to start to-morrow and sail to-morrow night, or next morning. I will try to get a card or so posted first, when I've seen the post.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 13th Sept., 1911.*

You can't think how I'm straining on the leash. To depart and be at Dalnotter—which is far better. But don't say this to any Presbyterian. I've written offering Monday to Wednesday at Fintry and accepting Wednesday to Friday at Archerfield. Makes my recent ridiculous decoration look like a job (which it was.)

I see that Bishop Alexander is dead. Not that I know

who he was or is, but it does seem a pity, Lucie says, when people die and you have never enjoyed their lives.

With all this play writing I resent your having to spout long pieces of verse full of names and bookishness. And it would be such fun to get you to work on the right thing. Not Pageants, which are best acted by owls.

I don't know what to do about Dalnotter. You see I get bored so dreadfully by staying away from it. What can I do?

### TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS <sup>1</sup>

*Ferry Hinksey, 4 Oct., 1911.*

I am so glad to hear that you are publishing. I heard only two of the lectures, but I want nothing better than your criticism of the Romantic depreciation of France. Keats (to be quite plain) was an ignorant boy—except where life is concerned. Wit, Fancy, Understanding—good heavens, the world is starving for lack of them! Humour, Imagination, Reason—splendid things, but pretenders to them are not always found out.

I sometimes envy you in France, where a savant is a savant; not a jack-of-all-trades, as almost all professors are, here in England, after the age of fifty. I wonder if you find as I do that writing attracts you less as the years pass. I would rather talk. Then letters; last of all, books. Education has taken the fine bloom off the writing of books.

### TO MISS A. T. O'CONNOR

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Nov., 1911.*

I should like to be allowed to read Miss W.'s poems, but not if it is a condition that I am to give a verdict on them,

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English at the Sorbonne.

or "judge" them. I should as soon think of asking people's children to tea in order that I might tell the parents impartially what I think of their offspring. This is sense; if you will think of it. Poetry is not easy to judge; you like it, or you don't; but if you don't, you often feel that you haven't got there and that you might come to like it. What is meant is right enough and interesting enough, if you could catch it. The moral is that I advise Miss W. to print, or, better, publish. Then I can read the poems without embarrassment.

Poetry is so personal a thing, that you might as well say you will come to dinner if I will promise to say what I think of your dress. O no! Go on the stage, or publish, and I am freer.

Poets know this; when they ask for criticism, what they want is praise. Sometimes they do not find it out till they have been criticised unfavourably. Then they know.

They are quite right. I want to be liked, and I don't mind being told about it. But I must leave room for silence, without compelling it to mean distaste.

So you see I won't be the critic: I won't. If I may read the poems the debt will be owed by me.

O these poets! They all want disciples and get them too. So we have to be very careful and defensive, or there we are, converts and evangelists.

I'm glad I'm *super-Oxford*, or *non-Oxford*. I remember Professor Firth said to me when I came that he hoped I wouldn't let myself be frightened by Oxford. I didn't understand him, but I begin dimly to see what he meant. Yet the terrible animal is quite tame, really. It jibs a little, and bites if you say "poor fellow" with an outstretched nervous hand.

## TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Dec., 1911.*

I am ashamed to have sent you no word with the pamphlets. I'm glad you liked the end of Aberystwyth<sup>1</sup>—it's the only good bit. I thought perhaps it was exciting and true. Only perhaps, for the combination is difficult. The play<sup>2</sup> was a sequel to the King and the Miller of Masefield—an appalling governessy thing for a toy theatre. I develop the characters.

Tine is a sub-lieutenant. Hilary seems likely to get into Sandhurst. It's not easy to realise that they're both offered up, so to say, if war breaks out. It's horribly likely. But I'm sure it's all right—and I'd rather say so now. I couldn't later, perhaps, but it's true.

There's too much to talk about. I adore politics just now. Also I've been lecturing at Glasgow, at the Art School. Now that I'm not there I'm quite the craze.

You can't think how often we think of you. The house is an extraordinary reminder. A statue is a toy to it. We're frightfully happy in it, just as if it were a dream house.

O, I forgot. Some people in Glasgow want me to be Gifford Lecturer in "Natural Theology." I don't think they'll convince the authorities. If they do, I've half been talked into taking it. I don't know, The thing is—can I just write my own essays? The first would be called *Why it is not Wise to Talk about God*. Then Essays on human life. It's very lucrative, so the only question is—could I write my own essays?

## TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, 22nd Dec., 1911.*

In my thoughts I often talk to you, but I can't write; there are too many things to discuss. What is Stanway?

<sup>1</sup> *The Meaning of a University*, An Inaugural address delivered to the Students of University College, Aberystwyth, on Aug. 20, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Richard who would not be King*, A Puppet Play.

I have thought and thought. Once I thought it was a place ; now I'm sure it's not. If it were pulled down and the plough went over it, it would bob up again somewhere else. It's an atmosphere, or perhaps a dream. It had to be thought of first ; and as soon as it was thought of the stones danced into shapes. If anyone feels like Stanway, he shall find it builds itself. This sounds like Christianity, which is true.

We had no end of a time. I have a dim sense that I behaved badly, did what Lucie calls jumping down people's throats (without intent). But I should be very sorry and surprised if my power to offend exceeded your power to forgive. You will think me a smug, light-minded sinner to be so contented. But I never could do with the sense of sin in anyone. I missed Cynthia. I could count on the fingers of a maimed hand the friends I have to whom I don't want to talk. I think she is the most complete of them. I believe I know (partly) what she thinks, but I can't remember that she ever said it. It's like the trees and the sky. It's not youth and beauty, which is as much one thing as the other, it's faith and nature. So if I'm rhapsodising, that's all right ; it's the immortal Gods I'm celebrating.

This is only a Collins, and a Collins should not wade into deep places. It should be loving but neat. It should stay in the shallows with H.C., who really I think hates the depths which have meant unhappiness to him, and who splashes divinely.

#### TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, 22 Jan., 1912.*

We had Mrs. Clough staying with us this week end. She was trying to describe her impression of ——'s books, and she said " I always feel as if I were a dog trying to read a book by a cat."

In the competition for the best thing on this subject I should like to enter this,

I hope we shall meet. I went to Harlech which was a mere sheep-bog in the rain—but it is a subject.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

*Ferry Hinksey, 25 Jan., 1912.*

The argument about the British Academy (damn its impudence) is sufficient and conclusive. I should find it quite easy to refuse to speak on Browning if you hadn't made it hard. But I have thought about it, and I really don't see my way. There will be some interesting problems presently, just now there can be nothing but a deferred funeral and speeches expressing the admiration and affection of his own people. And I can't put my other jobs on one side, and I do find the obituary a difficult instrument to play, though I confess I should enjoy an audience of augurs.

The young I think are, for the present, not reading Browning much. Donne and Crabbe are going strong.

You make me feel guilty, but that's your skill. Geography is too much for me. I'm full up here, in this place, where I live.

TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Jan., 1912.*

This letter must not be answered. The serious thing is that you do too much. The party-system is what is needed. Then the Opposition would take office in Stanway (I don't know how they could find a Ministry, or where they are) and you would have the time of your life. Most wise people say about 1/20th of what they think. (The figure is only approximate, like the figures for the Welsh Church). I say about 1/2. I am often afraid of my practice, so it's a comfort every time that no harm comes of it. There's a kind of Providence, or natural protective instinct, that looks after gibberoons, as it looks after drunkards and children, so long

as they mean no ill. I think my objection to the habit of discreet silence (I feel very strongly about it, though I admit its apologies) is that it magnifies things so, and makes humanity so terribly self-important.

"The fox, the owl, the spider and the bat  
By sweet reserve and modesty grow fat."

I don't mind that so much. I read it—

"The fox, the owl, the spider and the bat " Or rather—  
"The wren, the mole, the beetle and the rat  
Think *they* are what the world is pointing at."

*So I'm going on.* After all the free talkers are not the greatest betrayers of secrets. A Boer, after two hours' talk with me, called me "the *slim* Englishman." He meant it for high praise. Yet I had said all I knew.

We were thinking of you a day or two ago and wondering when you would puff up the hill again for lunch. Things are as you left them. Hilary has had an operation, ordered by the War Office people, and he's snuling in bed in the Acland Home. I lecture, well and ill, to small audiences. I love —, but he positively intrigues me by the sureness and swiftness with which he cuts off the head of any real thing as soon as it is said. His affections are so sincere; it's funny that his passions should be so insincere. There, I only wanted to talk to you.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 March, 1912.*

Don't let your Suffragette burn the Forest. Interest her in *Emigration*.

Perhaps silly women will do the nation good. We have had a great many silly men (like Shelley) who could never have been kept alive if women had been equally silly. Now the men perhaps will have to be steadier.



Anyhow nothing is commoner than for authors to be silly. Humorous and even wise in their books, but mad mice when they get into affairs. I will tell you about — when we meet.

I think things were never better in my life. So much alive. All kinds of mistakes, and rebellions against God, but his power to get his own way is very considerable, so I can't feel irritated by his rebels.

I'm sorry you don't like Bonar Law. I do. I like my narrow-minded men to be without unction. But the order in which I trust living statesmen is (1) Winston (2) Sir E. Grey. Balfour I like as a chorus.

If L. George is not found out soon I shall be puzzled. The worst of it is I have Celt enough in me to understand him. The Englishman doesn't understand emotional disclosures—thinks it rather nice. I am sorry to say I understand it.

Think of the clever instinct about the doctors! Here is a great pool of the most unselfish labour in the world, and no one claiming credit for it. No doctor saying, "See how generous and unselfish and helpful I am!" What a splendid thing to nab, and write L.G. on! Then trouble came, for even doctors must live, and L.G., profoundly moved, said, "Gentlemen, do not wrangle over a sick-bed." That's the meanest score attempted by a public man since I could read. It would puzzle me if its author lives it down.

TO F. AYDELOTTE

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 April, 1912.*

We shall be delighted to see you and your wife—to whom, though I have never seen her, I should like to send my very kind regards. If you come here, any subject you like can be put on (*ad hoc*, as they say) at my class. It's very elastic. By the bye, I don't much believe in *influences* as a study—of one literature upon another. They exist, of course, but they

lend themselves to mechanical work, like stamp-collecting. The question is not what a man borrowed, but what use he made of it. If he merely borrowed, and kept it in a napkin, he's not worth study. All the great poets prefer *raw* material to work on, rather than other poets' treatment of it. They learn their instrumentation, no doubt, from the experts. But Rogues and Vagabonds were better than *The Academic Drama*. The question is not which Scent-bottles they got the loan of, but what they ate.

Universities are very depressing. Sometimes I think they are stupider than Stock Exchanges, whereas they exist to be more intelligent.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*

12 June, 1912.

I have just been writing to Kuno, telling him of your gorgeous book.<sup>1</sup> I want to get his help in planting it on the learned world. Just to quicken his interest I have mentioned (in strict confidence) that if this can be got to go down, the second volume in the *Forgotten Languages* series will be a dictionary and syntax of the language of the Shepherd Kings of Egypt recorded from the conversation of a beach-comber in the Solomon Islands. I hope I did right. It's important to start the thing in several places, so that confirmation shall spring up and divert the chase. Donald will be a great help. He has almost given up his other 37 languages, and uses only all-wool five-star Romany when he orders a drink. Unfortunately he hardly ever orders a drink.

You will think me dreadfully timid, but I couldn't help telling Kuno some of my fears. Still, I admit I haven't

<sup>1</sup> This refers to *Roman Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales*, to be published shortly by the Clarendon Press.

made a special study of the digestion of philologists. I should have been inclined myself to give them more fresh roots and a good deal less inflection. They'll get tangled in the inflection at first, but when they get together and unwind them, I'm afraid of them. I would have kept them apart, digging at the roots.

TO J. W. WILKINSHAW

*Oxford, 20 June, 1912.*

Your letter is a challenge, by proxy. I have not the time or inclination to take up the challenge; and you will not, I hope, think it unreasonable in me, to refuse what would be a long and (to my mind) a foolish controversy.

I have read Judge Webb, but I confess I am not exhaustively acquainted with the writings of "Baconians." I will here make only two remarks:

(1) All the Baconians whose writings I have read came to the study of Shakespeare with a case to prove. Not one of them, so far as I know, has given evidence of a study of the plays for their own sake. They are pleaders, who enjoy a hobby. Their view of Shakespeare is about as complete as Sergeant Buzfuz's view of Mr. Pickwick.

(2) All the Baconian treatises that I have read make much of the contrast between the so-called enormous learning of the plays and the small opportunities of the so-called yokel of Stratford.

This contrast, which has inspired many a treatise, reveals a profound misconception. No good scholar who knows the plays of Shakespeare could possibly mistake him for a learned man.

One cannot ask elderly lawyers to come back to school and study Elizabethan literature for a term of years, free from all preoccupation with acrostics and anagrams. Yet that, however arrogant it sounds, is the true reply. What is the use of discussing coincidences of diction in Bacon and

Shakespeare with those who mistake common Elizabethan phrases for marks of an author's identity?

Let the Baconians *edit* Shakespeare! There is my challenge in reply. Till that is done, it is absurd in them to expect equal treatment. Think of the long line of critics and editors that went before them. Must I defend myself for agreeing with Ben Jonson and Dryden and disagreeing with Judge Webb? Am I to neglect all that has been done by the editors from Rowe to Furnivall?

If a long book were written to show that Jeremy Bentham wrote the works of Charles Lamb, I don't know whose duty it would be to answer it.

The real trouble is that these gentlemen (distinguished men, some of them, I do not doubt) cannot read. Those of us who can read get knowledge of a man's mind from his books—The Baconians seek no such knowledge. If Shakespeare's work and Bacon's were both anonymous, no intelligent reader could mistake them for the utterances of a single man.

I have spoken bluntly; to speak in any other way would be false.

You are very welcome to publish this letter, *complete*. I have nothing to add to it.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 7 July, 1912.*

When I got home I sat down and wrote an essay on Matthew Arnold (critic). I have just finished it and sent it off to the Glasgow publishers who will print it as a preface to a measly shilling reprint of the 1865 *Essays in Criticism*. So no one will ever see it, unless I rescue some copies. I like it, but an odd thing happened to it. It came out much more hostile than I intended or than I knew I thought. That's a funny thing about writing, if you shut yourself up. You find out what you really think. Now I sat down to write an

appreciation of a great critic, and found out that I didn't think so at all. His poetry is lovely, so I had to explain a good deal. He *excluded* people ; and I *explain* them. I don't know which is more deeply offensive. Which do you think ?

We had a delicious time—I felt very every-day and restful—partly I suppose because Philip is an everyday affair. She was in heaven, though quite responsible, which I should never be in Heaven.

The Insurance Bill I see is to be buried at once under a Minimum Wage Undeveloped Land Tax Act. It's a most sporting idea to obliterate past errors by piling on the excitement. My dramatic sympathies were awakened by it. How long can we keep the Government in if we burn the furniture to drive the engines ? It makes me feel quite heroic, like Palissy the Potter. Still it has its pathetic side—all the dutiful people who buy stamps to stick on the dead will be like Palissy's poor wife and children. But I'm not going to complain of the world while it's such larks.

#### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 July, 1912.*

Don't you enjoy this Government ? It's to be Land for all now, to drown the cries of the Insurance victims. What next ? They will be driven to propose to abolish the Throne, not because they want to, but to divert people's minds.

It will be a jolly crash when it comes. Give 'em rope is what I say. Nothing they do works, and only its failure can educate the asses who are their stalwarts. The Single Tax is a lunatic asylum scheme.

I want a League of Blacklegs—to contain only efficient skilled men. Could you get some printers ? All artists, authors, &c., are blacklegs anyhow unless they are dam bad.

I hope you are at your book. I've just written a preface

to M. Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*. A low shilling Glasgow reprint. I'll send it you. No one but you gets all my stuff, but I fear you don't get it all when I forget. I will send you my preface to Halifax, the Trimmer. Writing on M.A. after that made M.A. seem a poor kind of creature. I didn't know how little I liked his prose till it came upon me as I wrote. It's not bad fun, but I do wish he was alive, to read my indecorous japes. Some perhaps may be cheap, but others are bang on the spot and very searching. He never was *explained*, was he, in his life-time.

P.S. Was he a Jew? I have assumed that he was. But can it be proved? I know it, by his face, and his writing. My essay is on the cultured Jew.

To L. R. .

R.Y.S. "*Wanderer*,"

Plymouth, Aug. 4, 1912.

. . . We left Swanage at 4.0 yesterday morning and got a fine S.E. breeze, so we buzzed along and thought we should get to Penzance this morning (Sunday) instead of Monday night. But we didn't. In the afternoon between Portland Bill and the Start the sky got very black and threatening and the wind and sea rose, so that we were chucked along on great humping waves. The skipper said we must make for Plymouth and we did, and wind steadily rising till it was a gale before we got in. The boom got loose in gibbing, and we had some time just driving anyhow before the wind. We got in about 12.0 p.m. It was a splendid sight to see the huge waves like mountains under the search lights of the battleships. All the chairs and things tumbled about, and the table, though it is a swing table, emptied itself on to the floor. So I went up and held on and got very wet. It was certainly a wild jolly sight, and not uncomfortable, for we were driving with the wind.

Now it's Sunday morning and we are inside the break-water, the wind still very fierce.

P.S. is anxious to be a sea-dog, but I tell him he won't get much beyond being a waterside character—if so far.

It's a pity Tine's not here. I would dress up and call.

The weather's so awful I can't tell. We can't get to Penzance against a S.W. gale, which it is. We shall see. I'll wire when I can.

Sometimes I'm rather homesick, when we hang about like this ; but I mustn't say *damn* because everything I say *damn* for is exactly what I came for. Weather, and things rolling about, and *everything* damp, is what I came for. But I am sorry to miss Tine. Goodbye. There's talk of a motor on Dartmoor—I don't know. It's dark all day, but quite a success.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Queen's Hotel, Queenstown,  
Aug. 17, 1912.*

It is a grief to me that my yachting is over, and we never got near you. Such weather ! But I found it was out of the question ; it is really too far. We went to the Skelligs, high and holy rocks in the extreme south, where monks lived in beehive stone cells, incredibly early, and then I got off here because I must go home. I have just had dinner at a little table by myself in an hotel—a very rare experience. I don't like thinking while one dines. The small groups all talk to one another in low nervous voices, and have all the misery of appearing before an audience with no applause. I was placed so that I gazed full on an American couple ; he was like Sir Edward Grey grown fat, with a wig ; she was very fat, with nothing at all in her face, till she smiled at a mistake of the waiter when she at once was all right. But I sat there gazing on her, without her knowledge, I trust, and thinking. Her lace sleeves were too tight on her round arms. She was vacant and bored, and I thought what

untold gold it would be worth to me to know all that she knows. Should I be horrified? I can't help feeling it would be a shock. What do you think?

I have been seeing darling friends of mine called the Fluffs. Note the L, to prevent confusion. It is a mother and four daughters (and their husbands) living all together in a well-to-do house just as if it were an Irish cabin. They all talk at once. I love the Irish. I don't see how Ireland can ever be prosperous, it is too human.

I meant to tell you what the sea was like, but I can't. The powerlessness of you when you're riding out a gale far from land on a dark misty night with the sea terrible in power and unreason. Yet somehow it's quite soothing. Murder is dreadful, I am sure, because it's squalid to have any human cause for your death. War's different, because it's a game, and impersonal. I can't go on to another sheet now, after this attempt to make one sheet do. I must be strong, and end.

#### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, 20 Aug., 1912.*

I kind of feared I should not see your father again. I shall miss him dreadfully. You kept him much longer than he could have stayed if he had been left to himself! I remember I thought that or something like it when he insisted on rowing the boat at Crinan. The marvel is that he didn't die young—in years, I mean.

The worst of it is the number of times he will be needed back, especially when there are bores. These losses are spread over years, and they don't cost less with time, as they are said to do. I found it worst about three years later.

I can't write (with my hand)—from disuse, because I have been yotting, and the wall was often the floor.



## TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Aug., 1912.*

O I have had such a time on the sea on a sailing yacht. No rest for the weary ; we had to ride out a gale or two because it was thought unsafe to try and make the harbour.

This is just to say when. As for letters I can't write them. Nor can you. At least you won't. Why do Women of Genius never write long letters ? I suppose they are after Bigger Game. If you think of it Mme. de Sevigné and the other famous letterists were really a pack of governesses, after all. Pensive starved people.

I made a joke last night—too neat to be good. There was some rather ordinary wine from the Rhone district and I said " Minds innocent and quiet take This for an Hermitage." You mustn't tell this to Mr. Muir, or any Scotchman, for they think Puns are not Jokes, so they would despise me, which I cannot afford to have them do. When the Scotch despise you, you're a failure.

It rather wastes my summer, coming to Dalnotter in September. I sit thinking of it till the time comes. I shall bring some work.

## TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Aug., 1912.*

I wouldn't write if you hadn't said of course I was bored by your letter. And, by Jove, you can write letters. I can see your Atlantic. Around rocks and lone islands it has such enormous terrible power—every quiet lift of it could raise a million tons. Our 80 ton yacht was a cockle-shell. Beautifully made, taking each wave the easiest way, as if by judgment, like a tennis-player. But she does groan and creak at nights with the effort, and every now and then a wave she has misjudged gives her a great thundering bang ; and she stands still and shivers like a horse. It's a very small world, a yacht, and you are dependent on it, for the Atlantic makes you feel how foolish and suburban it is to

say that you can swim. If the yacht can't live, you can't.

I kind of like it ; the only uncomfortable thing was to see the skipper, as we saw him once or twice, obviously uneasy. But this was never in the open sea—always fog, or invisible lights, or entrances to harbours. When we rode out the gale he was so pleased with the boat, ducking, and lifting, and making little runs, and going at the sea now on the outside edge and now on the inside that he went below and smoked a pipe. He could hear what was happening. So I came up about 1.0 at night, because I had been tumbled out of my bunk, and I found no one on deck, and the tiller tied up a little to one side, and knew it was all right. But I never saw such a vicious wilderness as that sea, towering and racing to the wind's screams. It must have taken more pluck to sail the first ship than it did to fly the first aeroplane. You can't come down when you like or when it's past a joke.

We saw a sun-fish. Likewise a whale ! And 16,000 gannets, the size of geese, sitting carefully in tiers on a tilted inaccessible island of rock. There were no other ships—a dead lonesome sea. The most beautiful coast I have ever seen. The so-called yachtsmen of Cowes, it seems, have champagne lunches in the Solent and then spread canvas and take a two hours' run when the breeze is fair and light. They meet the same people at Cowes as they meet later at the grouse, and this life, which they made to resemble Heaven, must be the live facsimile of Hell. Different clothes, and the same well-fed, carefully exercised bodies, and the same bored minds tired of wondering whether passion will ever come their way. That is why they have such a superstition, quite sincere and simple, about people who do letters, or art, or in fact anything.

I write all this because you are in a wild place, and perhaps find books no use (*social* books won't stand the criticism of the Atlantic coast ; we found we couldn't read them ; Charlotte Brontë in *Shirley* was merely half-baked and unreal and ignorant). So this is about the things themselves, which are jealous, like God, of petty intimacies.

I'm supposed to be writing a book, but it's stuck. I hear my own voice in it, and it sounds silly. I'm going to send you my little essay on M. Arnold's criticism. Rather prejudiced, I'm afraid, but I'm getting old, and must say what I think. If I could live long enough I should start a Salvation Army in the World of Education. Who was the great thinker who, gazing on children, invented dons to meet their needs? I want to know his name. The only good don in Oxford is Charles Fisher (good all through, I mean) and I can't help wanting to get him out of the place. If I were the Dean I should sack him to-morrow, and call on him five years later to accept his thanks.

Goodbye: I have much to say about Ireland and its curious shabby-genteel gentlefolk, but I mustn't begin. Home Rule will be a roaring farce, rather melodramatic, not intellectual. I found all the Irish like people in bad plays. At first I thought this was my fault, but now I think they *are* like that; they think chiefly of the neighbours' opinion of them, and play up to it. So silly books have really produced a national character. Who says that literature doesn't count? There wasn't one of these Irish who didn't reveal quite clearly what he, or she, but especially he, was thinking of himself. Suppose Don Quixote became the fashion in a boys' school! That's Ireland.

Sir H. Parry was very funny; he on board (with a cook) they on shore (with farms.) He is a sound Radical, self-indulgent, but touched by a sense of guilt towards others less fortunate. They will be all right, he says, when they manage their own affairs, and quite prosperous. But the devil of it is there are things they like better than prosperity.

I am awfully comfortable among them. Ireland is a perfect nest for all that is most profoundly unsatisfactory in my temper and character. So I love the Irish; and Sir H. Parry dislikes them quite acutely. I remember that Adamson, who was a Radical, hated men in public-houses (whom I often like.) There must be some cause for all this.

## TO JOHN SAMPSON

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*

22 Oct. 1912.

I'm glad you liked the Halifax. He's a swell. The Introduction is, as you say, in parts a veiled treatise on modern politics.

This age is hardly fit to read him. Lucie tells me that she read to-day, in a bookshop for ladies, an article on the Advice to a Daughter. The writer, a lady, wrote as you would expect. I sketched the article at once, quite correctly. Shocking status of women in Chas. II's reign. Lamentable baseness of men. No sense of religion in Halifax, &c. &c.—all the old Girls' High School clichés. The High School system is really giving us a kind of female priesthood, vain and deformed, priding itself on "literature" and "thought." God help little girls! But I daresay they're all right.

The printing is glorious, better than my Lord ever had in his life-time. So I've done something for him. He little thought he would ever be loved. How he does dissect politicians, and dissenters—who are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

I read Meredith's letters only in several reviews, and couldn't abide a line of them. But I now understand why the Intellectuals recognise him at once as their King. He is. A plain human situation, and its obvious meaning, is nothing to him till he can dress it in his brain vanities. He lived much alone, and was certainly incapable of simple human intercourse. His letters shocked me. An oldish man, writing like a conceited jackanapes.

The Kuno Meyer portrait is a wretched daub. The fact is G. Moore can't draw anyone who isn't slightly silly. Kuno's four-square good sense pipped him. But how delicious he is on "Edward"—"praying heavily." The Table of Contents should run "Attempt to make Prof. Meyer a fantastic figure. Failure of said attempt. Prof. Meyer remains as before."

## TO LADY ELCHO

*Ferry Hinksey, Oct. 30, 1912.*

(Monday Dec. 2. Lunch here. Sat. Dec. 14, Stanway. These are kept, subject to Time, Chance, Fate, and the incalculable Mind of Man.)

I put the practical parts in brackets, and now get back to my letter, but I've forgotten what I had to say. Really practical people never try to remember. They think letters are a form of mental decay. Mr. Balfour is improving. He wrote me a long letter. All his others had only his signature by him, this one was twice as long, for it had an autograph apostrophe (O Thou, etc.) at the beginning. All he has got to study now is to pack the space between with authentic matter.

But I don't believe he'll make a letter-writer. He gets to the point at once, and then stops.

I am deeply interested in your cult of the outlaw. Of course I knew it, but it never occurred to me that you knew. It reminds me of a sentence in a solemn *life* of an 18th century poet—"He had so strong a propension to groveling, that his acquaintance were generally of such a cast as could be of no service to him." I sometimes think that only poets and artists, and people of that temper, have friends. Most of the world gets on with dependants, patrons, and Aunt Jemima. It's a restful thing to live wholly with the people you're thrown with. I like to be for months with (say) the English teaching dons of Oxford. But I'm lazy. And I think I generally speak second—a trait which I hate, but I can't help it. Those who speak first take all the risk and dispense most of the joy. But if all the best things have come to you suddenly from nowhere it's difficult to learn how to make your living.

Robert Bridges has just been in on the way down the hill. He is delightfully grumpy. He mentions thing after thing which is commonly believed and says that of course it's not so. He's always right. His intellect has been so completely self-indulged that it now can't understand rubbish. He

has never obeyed anyone or adapted himself to anyone, so he's as clear as crystal, and can't do with fogs. He brought with him a nice bright-eyed girl, or child, who hung on his words and thought ineffable things which played over her face like a little breeze, while we, the Old and Horny, did the talking.

What fun it would be if children had the power of speech !  
They *are* so modest, that they just bottle their thoughts.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 Nov., 1912.*

I didn't know that anyone would like Halifax <sup>1</sup> as much as you do. He deserves it. I can't think, at this moment, of any other author who is never *silly*, and so is a comfort all the time.

It's almost eerie to read him on the Dissenters. They were just as they are.

I have read two articles on him, one in *The Times*, the other in a feminist paper. They made me despair. Of course *The Times* was the better ; but both were cock-a-hoop about how completely we have outgrown the *low* views of Halifax. When people deceive themselves, some knave or other ought to gain by it, but who is a penny the better by this sentimental vanity ? It is mere sloppiness. Neither of them detected the extraordinary affection of the man, nor his extraordinary insight, inspired by affection. So I thought the book was no use. " He has not been reprinted," said I, " because hardly anyone is fit to read him." They prefer to smirk in their blinkers. What is a solid comfort to me is a violent discomfort to them. And, mark, they are all " educated," and proud of it. So I thought of the book as a secret tribute on a tomb. " Better print and paper than ever you had in your life," I said, as I left it. And now a reader has really been found.

<sup>1</sup> His *Introduction to The Complete works of George Savile, First Marquis of Halifax*. (Clarendon Press.)

I think Halifax should be read only by men above 40 and women above 30. What they think of him is something of a test.

TO H. H. TURNER

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 Dec., 1912.*

I should love to come to the Oyster Feast. I have been there once, with George, my first year here. To be courageous, it ought to be oysters, and stout, and brown bread and butter—nothing else. How good that would be!

Very many thanks for your kindness to Flecker.<sup>1</sup> I hope Lindsay understood him. His appearance and impression disaffects all disciplinarians. But he's all right, in the wide world.

Wed. Dec. 18. 7.30. New College, I suppose.

TO SANKI ICHIKAWA<sup>2</sup>

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 June, 1913.*

Thank you so much for the beautiful flower vase. With one flower in it will look perfect, and will be a pleasant memory of your visit. I like the Japanese way of making an aristocracy of flowers, each with its separate place, instead of a crowded democracy.

TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 July, 1913.*

It is no figure of speech to say that I am greatly honoured by your invitation. After all, we are islanders, and civilisation is Roman and continental. I shall be delighted to give four lectures. If you would accept four lectures on

<sup>1</sup> James Elroy Flecker.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sanki Ichikawa had attended some of his lectures at Oxford.

four names—say, Lamb, Hazlitt, Landor, and another of that time, I could give them just after the New Year. If you would prefer something with a single thesis in it, I could lecture on “The Decline of Romance in English Poetry”—a sort of history of the English poetry of the XIX century—of course from a single point of view. But for this I should need longer time, say till just after Easter.

The lectures on separate names would be better, I think, and less ambitious. I am never quite at ease when I get away from the live men. The general propositions are better as *obiter dicta*; they are apt to become wearisome to me when they are my theme.

My wife, who likes no place, I think, so well as Paris, hopes to come with me, and to have the pleasure of making Madame Legouis’ acquaintance.

Philippa is very well, and, alas, very old; she is nine, and terribly full of sound sense. She tells me every other day that I am silly.

I feel shy at the prospect of lecturing at the Sorbonne, but not shy of addressing you. When I read your books and hear you talk I marvel at these strange barricades of language. Believe me.

#### TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 16 July, 1913.*

I have thought about it, and what I should like to do is this:—*The Prose Criticism of the Romantic Revival.*

1. The Reviewers.
2. Hazlitt.
3. Charles Lamb.
4. Landor.

I could give these lectures in the first fortnight of 1914, the days and hours to suit your convenience.

I have a letter from the Vice-Rector, which I will answer later, but I thought I would rather arrange with you first.

It is a matter of shame to me (or, to be quite honest, I



should perhaps say regret) that I can't say what I think in French. That is to say I can't talk to educated people. Only a tragic necessity could make me vocal. But kindness is very tolerant, so I must count on that.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Station Hotel, Holyhead,  
17th August, 1913.*

Here I am stranded like a flounder in Holyhead for a whole Sunday, surrounded by people who look like flounders (except such of them as look like cod.) It's a woeful thing to get your letter now I can't come. Sir H. Parry is a kind old boy, but as wilful as they make 'em, so he wouldn't bind himself to call anywhere, and I have had no letters for twelve days. It was a funny thing to see Scotland from the sea, Ben Nevis and Ben Lomond and Goatfell, and Macrihanish (quite close) and all kinds of wonderful out of the way places that you can't see from the land. We had a heavenly Sunday in the Sound of Islay catching skate and octopus and dogfish, each looking more hellish than the last. I believe the devil is a sea-beast. The standard of conduct is certainly very low in the sea, so perhaps he prefers to corrupt us. We went to Iona which is a good place except when the steam boat arrives.

When I say we had a heavenly time I mean we had the material for a heavenly time ; but three independent courteous men, not much interested in each other, don't have a heavenly time anywhere, and it would be a queer thing if they did.

I would wander on, but I've had a fright lately about long letters. Most people put them straight into their pockets (or reticules) in the hope that some day they may be of use, others pick out the practical things ; but no one reads the lot.

*Practical.* I am looking forward to September about 15th, or perhaps later. I'm so glad you're not in Japan.

TO CYNTHIA ASQUITH

*Station Hotel, Holyhead,  
17 August, 1913.*

I am here in Holyhead for a Sunday, because I can't get away. I was dropped by the yacht after going to Iona. There are no industries in Holyhead, and no amusements, so I have done nothing but think. The inhabitants are very Welsh, and seem to feel it acutely. They talk very excitably about it. The hotel is full of Irishmen, no English almost. You see a grim-looking man with a beaky nose, a picture of calm judgment, but when he orders his dinner, his voice goes up and down like a child's and he waves his hands. Most of the Irishmen are like Captain Costigan or Barry Lyndon, but quite harmless, from transparency. They would like to impose upon you, but they can't.

It was quite pleasant on the yacht, after a day or two. If I had my way, I would be attended by six sailor-men all my life. We went to Iona, and had all kinds of weather. There was no mutiny. We caught octopus and dog-fish and skate, which has a more devilish face than a spider. I'm glad I don't live in the sea—such a strain.

I wonder where you are. Will you both come, perhaps, with John, and see us, when Oxford begins?

I haven't had such a dull Sunday for years and years. I rather like it. I should (almost) welcome a bore. I read in a Sunday paper that people often forgive you for boring them, but never for being bored by them. That's rather good, for a Sunday paper. But it's a kind of charter for bores.

P.S. The yacht was *a very poor place*, compared with Kingsgate.

## TO PERCY SIMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 4 Sept., 1913.*

I am delighted to hear you are going to pitch your tent here. I am writing to Tiddy (R. J. E. of Trinity)—he handles a good deal of the tutoring work, and can perhaps help to put pupils in your way. As for B. J., I think he must be content with a preserve of certain days in the week and a chunk of the vacations (which, after all, are half the year in this last fortress of the reasonable old abuses).

I'm glad to hear W. Morris's single witticism.<sup>1</sup> It's awfully good—I doubt if he meant it. He was a hale old party, with a skipper's beard and a loud voice, but I cannot get rid of the impression that there was a strain of the school-girl in his soul. A little, just a little, silly, I think. Everyone who writes about him is just a little silly, too. So the witticism is a great refreshment.

## TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 Sept., 1913.*

Your questions and mine are two brands, I fancy, but I will take care to keep simple and broad.

The worst of it is, I can't read Shakespeare any more, so I have to remember the old tags. Not that I think him a bad author, particularly, but I can't bear literature. This distaste must be watched, or they'll turn me out. It's their money I want, so I suppose I've got to go on and be an old mechanical hack on rusty wires, working up a stock enthusiasm for the boyish lingo of effusive gentlemen long since dead. I always said no good would come of poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Furnivall at the inaugural meeting of the English Association in London, thinking to help English by attacking the Classics, ended by saying, "William Morris once said to me, Damn the Classics—What do you think, Furnivall?"

## TO HUBERT PARRY

*Ferry Hinksey, 24 October, 1913.*

You can't think what a pleasure your pipes were. A packet—I left it unopened for about five hours, and opened it with a sigh. I knew that a packet commonly means something to do, or to write, and I anticipated no pleasure.

When I saw the pipes I almost shouted. I never get presents now (except books from the silly authors of them) and those pipes have renewed my youth. At last the post has brought me something to enjoy. I revel in them. My habits will now be worse than ever—perfectly awful. They come in a nick of time ; my old friends are far through.

You sound as if you were pretty well—I hope you are. . . . I can't get over the pipes. It's most tremendous of you. I love them. They're not heavy, either, only large and capacious, "To make a pipe for my capa-a-a-cious mouth." I wish I could sing. I would.

## TO R. J. GUNTHER

*Ferry Hinksey, 18 Nov., 1913.*

The pheasants were a great event. Philippa brought them in, glorious in feathers, (and very fat) and dumped them on my bed, and said, "These are for you to eat." As if I were an ogre. It was most awfully kind of you. Parts of them, eaten by W. P. Ker and Charles Whibley, have now (I presume) become good literature. This bright change took place on Sunday at lunch, and I am writing the In Memoriam.

Very many thanks.

## TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 Dec., 1913.*

I'm writing a lecture for Newnham on Saturday—Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture. It's on Dryden, because

they hate Dryden who was not sentimental. So I'm going to rub him in. I don't see why I should be Feminist while they refuse to be Masculinist. There's a give and take in these things.

It's quite true that busy people are humbugs mostly. Such a tiresome pretence, too. If no one did anything but what is necessary, there would be nothing in the papers. The idiots *make* the work, mostly, and then do it. The world goes round from lack of brains, like a squirrel in a cage.

Anyhow, as one gets older, one realises that one has nothing but one's friends. One and one and one and one ! Quite like Peckwater.

Why not Easter ? I've got to write an essay on *Burrrrrns*. For a life. I expect I shan't be able to avoid saying what I think. Dumfries is awful—like a room where they've been drinking whisky over night, with the portrait of the late lamented in crape.

Why can't people die and have done with it ?

#### TO PERCY SIMPSON

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*  
13 Dec. 1913.

I think that's all right. It would perhaps attract if you said that you are willing to pay some attention to the text of authors who are being specially studied by members of the class.

The theories of women tutors about the *sequence* of classes are beyond finding out. They ticket Chaucer as elementary ; Shakespeare I believe is advanced. The text, in the books they use (which always have notes) comes first, so it's elementary. All the English poets stand, like bright-harnessed angels, in order serviceable, ready to perform their assigned work, and to prepare the virgin's mind for examination.

Tell them who ought to come to you, and they'll send 'em, I think. Mention especially the intelligent, and those who want to study literature as an end, not a means. There are always one or two girls keen, and fit to learn editing and scholarship. *Ask for 'em.*

Would you like to lecture again soon? You'd get a better audience. Say when you're ready.

To E. V. LUCAS

*Hotel Prince de Galles,  
Rue d'Anjou, Paris,  
12 Jan., 1914.*

Here I am in Paris sitting in a parlour of an inn and waiting to lecture on C. Lamb to-morrow at the Sorbonne. They are a wonderful people here; about 800 come to my lectures and they all seem to understand. Curiously generous, too, quite prepared to believe that a Russian, or an Englishman, or an American even, is the absolute thing. I had dinner last night with 24 learned men at the house of an American of amazing wealth. I thought the learned men admirable, they were courteous and grateful, with no sort of flattery or pretence. He was rich and kind, they were dignified and happy. No one seemed to wish to dress up the facts. It was like the patronage of the Renaissance. We in England are not such good talkers. Nor have we the genius for truth of this surprising people.

I wish I could write out C. L.<sup>1</sup> just after the lecture, for things come to me warm while I lecture. It's difficult later, when they've grown cold, and are sitting in their frozen dripping. But I have to go straight back to Oxford and begin to lecture day after day on Victorian literature with only casual preparation. If one didn't know about Victorian literature without a course of study, it would be

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lucas had asked for the lecture on Lamb to be included in *Methuen's Annual*.

a sad world. Still, I can't generally write in term. I will do C. L. if I can, and anyhow you shall have him, late or early, to do what you like with. He's really a *lecture*. In an essay people won't read long quotations, so one doesn't get the full effect.

I'm deeply interested in Lamb and Shelley. I like Shelley for liking Lamb, and I rather think I like Lamb for not liking Shelley. No doubt he would have liked him if he had known him only as a dead bygone author. Shelley alive was a little too much, with his clouds and nightingales and free love, and all so public. The squeaking voice, too. For Lamb to say "here is a great poet" would have been a kind of betrayal of all he lived for. No doubt he did not know how unselfish the creature was. A bright being, but not a man—as Henley once said.

I should like to write a story of a millionaire who commits suicide when he discovers that an egg and bread-and-butter tastes nicer than red caviare and strawberries out of season, and that all he can buy with his money is a little extra safety. But I shan't write it, for they give me my keep for talking, and why should I?

You sent me a beautiful Christmas card, and this must be the acknowledgment.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 13th April, 1914.*

Well, I came back here, and put it off, and put it off, and at last on Sunday week, began an essay on R. Burns. I had a nine days' agony, and finished yesterday, and sent it off. I think it's the best thing I've ever written, but how should I know? If Scotland isn't satisfied, Scotland never will be. Burns can't have more, even in heaven, than he's got from me. It don't come out till October, and then in a 30/- 2 vol. handsome, illustrated reprint of Lockhart's *Life*. So no one will ever see it, but it's the

best essay on R. B. for all that. It's not *middle-class*, like all the other essays. "How sad, how dreadful, and yet what wonderful talent! Such a sweet singer, but for those bad habits! I'm sure the girls are quite fond of *My Nannie's awa'*—they sing it as a duet. What a pity it all was!"

My thing is simply alive. So there—no modesty, you see.

### TO C. H. WILKINSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 June 1914.*

I'm sorry it can't be this time <sup>1</sup>—we are close on the end of term, and a pile of businesses and promises is waiting for me.

It would be delightful; but a lecture, to be any good, must take possession of the mind for some days; and there's no room for it there just now.

I think Eton's all right, though perhaps, in the idleness of my tramp's mind, I have sometimes yielded to temptation and teased its worshippers. I told one last night that it is a splendid school for bracing intellectual exercise, but perhaps pays too little attention to manners and social life. For one moment I thought he was going to refute me, but he saved himself on the brink.

It's Harrow I can't bear, where large young men in a disgraceful costume stand up and chant in unison a maudering song about the pathos of their own adolescence. In this matter, I take it, Eton is with me.

Anyhow a Public School is a jolly good place to leave, and whoever says it isn't talks sickly. I mean for boys to leave—a salary changes the issue.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wilkinson was then a master at Eton and had asked W. R. to give a lecture there that term.



## TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 18 June, 1914.*

Will you have a go at this? It is an Introduction to Lockhart's *Life* for H. Young & Sons (in the name of old times.) Do give me word of it. I've sent in corrected galleys, but no doubt they will send me page proofs.

In my own particular explanatory line I think it's as good an essay on a man (works be damned) as I've written. It cost me nine long days of filthy agitation. Now I'm idle again, and feel better.

Mind you I'm coming to a Mackay dinner on Wednesday week—I think it is. The question is, Are you?

And are you enjoying Ireland? O, I am. Scene: A brick wall. Proposal: to pass through it. The Archbishop of York suggests prayer (knowing better, I quite admit!). The *Westminster Gazette* suggests generous feelings and a full recognition of the disinterestedness of those who desire to pass through it. Scene, as before, a brick wall. I tell you, I'm in clover. I never hoped to see the Westminster Ape House look so silly as it's going to look. All the gut bags with the hairless rumps, worn out by long sitting.

I will send you my latest Poem,<sup>1</sup> spoken at the close of a Garden party here—impromptu.

## TO LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 June, 1914.*

Have you got the toothache? I can't hear what you say. For God's sake put your head out and say what you're up to. Parry asks me how long I'm good for. I say 3 weeks, if we start in August.

I don't want to go racketing about Sweden to find the yacht. How long does it take to cross? I suppose I'd

<sup>1</sup> "Wishes of an elderly Man," printed in *Laughter from a Gloud*, p. 228.

have to come back on my own? I hear there are splendid lakes. But land-work ain't good for him, though it means fresh bread and milk.

Is that dam engine in?

Just take a lift of your end, will you? What's it to be, and when?

We talked of you at Newington. Affectionately, we did. Lytton Strachey was there. He doesn't say anything, except *tête-à-tête*. I wish he would write a book called *Life Among the Man-haters, or Out against God*.

Couldn't you come and stay here for a bit?

#### TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 5 July, 1914.*

We never see you, so I think I had better send you my essay on Lockhart's *Life of Burns*. It's a preface to a book which is to cost 30/- in 2 volumes, full of plates, limited edition. So the proofs are all I can send you. John Sampson, who has read it, says that if Burns is, as I remark, Everyman, he is also Nowoman. I daresay that is true, my sister Jessie is the only exception I can remember. She won't hear blame of him.

John Sampson also thinks some of my figured writing too luxuriant—which it is, but I can't correct it till I reprint the Essay on my own account.

We do very well—I'm rather sad, I don't know why.

#### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Alverstoke, Hants, 8th August, 1914.*

My yacht trip is over; we were shot at (as a friendly warning) going into the Solent, and shot at again, and turned back, when we tried to get out. So there we are. I'm useless here, so I shall go back to Oxford next week.

Tine is on the *Edgar*, after commerce on the Atlantic. It's a measly cruiser, and is done if it meets anything big; till then it hopes to have a good time. Hilary's regiment will come home, and go to Belgium, I suppose. I wouldn't say no, if I could. The air is better to breathe than it has been for years, and we are not depressed. As for Hilary, it's what he wants, and war can't be hell where he is, burning with a white flame.

It's going to be a good war, though some of us will have a lot to bear. The world will be a better and more civilized world for Jocelyn and Hyacinth than ever it was for us, if once we can knock the Brute clean out of world politics. I've often known this must come when I've heard Germans talk about their destiny and their plans for achieving it. I'm glad I've lived to see it, and sick that I'm not in it.

### TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 19 August, 1914.*

I must write you a note, even if it never reaches you. We have been thinking of you, and Madame Legouis, and your sons.

This country is extraordinarily quiet and united—I have not heard a dissentient voice. There is a kind of national instinct that we are fighting for free government, of the sympathetic type, against a simpler and more brutal method. Kitchener has asked for 500,000 additional men, and he will get them—many of them from classes who have never yet served in the ranks.

I am glad to be rid of the German incubus. It has done no good, for many years, to scholarship;—indeed, it has produced a kind of slave-scholarship, though there are still some happy exceptions.

It is also a great pleasure to be no longer suspect to a nation from whom we have had such enormous gifts, through so many centuries.

We shall have to pay more than we can easily imagine, but everyone here thinks the purchase is worth the price. We shall get there, all right, and the little children of to-day will live in a better world than we have known.

W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 12 Oct. 1914.*

—— is a well-educated, sawdusty chap, a second will do him no harm. Miss —— is a half-educated bright girl, with a weakness for philosophic jargon. A First will probably convince her that she is simply The Thing. But do as you like. If only one is to be saved (and —— would certainly misconceive his utility if he got a First) it seems hard not to save the girl.

The Age of Chivalry is dead, but a father who is a bore isn't the canker in a family that a mother who is a bore is. Just let that be remembered. I am sorry to say it, but in my opinion Miss —— if she gets a First, will be a bore for some years at least. Of course the War improves her chances of recovery.

I have written my opinion thus fully and formally so that you may communicate it to the philosophers, on whom, and especially on Henry Jones, be peace. I would say truth, but if they had not the pleasures of the chase they would die of *ennui*.

I have just written a fish-wife's tirade on Germany, called *Might is Right*. I will send it to you.

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Oct. 23, 1914.*

. . . Two-thirds of the undergraduates are gone, and the rest are drilling. Oxford is a military city, which it hasn't been since Charles I was king.

You will be amused at what has happened to me. I suddenly realised that if we are invaded I should have to take orders from Germans about supplies. So I wrote to Godley, who drills veterans, and the consequence is I am to get up every morning at 6.0 and be drilled three miles from here from 7.0 to 8.0. Not much like me, is it? There are also afternoon drills, and route marches. Anyhow the only blot on this house is to be wiped out.

There won't be any invasion, but if there were, it would be too late to get into khaki.

Do you see that the married are recruiting much better than the Bachelors? It's funny, but I suppose it's sense. The name of the thing men fight for is woman. The unmarried don't see why they should fight for a dip in a bran-pie. The others fight for what they've got.

It's wonderful of these babes to give all their lives for us. Not just the concluding chapters, which is all the elderly have to give. No wonder every good woman feels that the only better thing than herself is a soldier. Not better, either, but just as good.

We're going to win, after a long time, and at an enormous cost, and we're going to give the Germans hell, which must be done, for they can neither think or feel till they learn to do both in that place.

If they hadn't been so vulgar they might have learned in peace, but they were so vulgar that no one spoke to them, and this little piece of daintiness is to cost five million lives. Talk of high politics, it's all pure village, and happens every day on a smaller scale. But I can't remember anything so vulgar as Berlin in the pages of history. Can't someone bottle the authors? I have just had a loathsome letter from Hall Caine, about a literary album, all gush and rant, to be given to the King of the Belgians. So I said—"Dear Sir, the best present to give to the King of the Belgians is Belgium. Two of the men of this household are at the front and the third is drilling, Yours truly." But nothing will prevent authors and fussers butting in. They feel they

don't matter, and they can't bear it. They're like the men of the Basque nation, who take to their beds and receive congratulations when their wives have a child.

TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, 5 Dec., 1914.*

I think you will find that it's all right about the Germans, and that though the wrestling match is long and looks indecisive; there will come a moment when our knee-bone is on their chest and our knuckles in their throat. I think they will then mew, and there will be no further trouble with them at all. They will be respectful, which is all that is required. One has to think of public gains, the private gains being not very obvious except to Jew tailors and armament syndicates.

Anyhow it's jolly to get the passengers off the quarter-deck for this trip.

Did you see the portrait of Captain Bradbury of Battery L? Only three gunners survived, wounded; they had worked their single gun till they knocked out a whole German battery, and when they were praised and got the V.C. and all, they merely said "It was all Captain Bradbury, we should never have done it but for him." He was killed half way through, and his portrait is the kind of face you can't see anywhere abroad, clean and simple, with eyes like steel, and obviously quite incapable of emotions that you don't act on at once. The portrait was in the *Daily Mail* side by side with the mobile dirty face of the German spy who is now Governor of Brussels. If you saw these two faces you would see that the Germans can't win. The world's a faulty place, but the cuttle fish and the skunk will not inherit it just yet.

I don't know why you live in Edinburgh where the people are all either homely or stuck-up. Glasgow's a gem to it. I should take the train and go back, if I were

you. You can do it for half-a-crown—there's no such good value for half-a-crown anywhere else in the world.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Dec., 1914.*

. . . I will tell you about Partridge<sup>1</sup> when there's anything. But indeed he hangs on a thread. We daren't stick much to the thought of him. That is, we think all the time and never talk.

Perhaps, by magic, he might get through.

The comfort is the thing's worth doing, and is an absolute present from a million young men, dead and alive.

Without that million, the passengers, who sprawl on the cushions, and abuse the porters, would go screaming over the embankment.

TO MRS. F. GOTCH

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Dec., 1914.*

I'm pleased—naturally—authors always are pleased to be told they did it. The little work<sup>2</sup> was produced in a hurry because I suggested War publications and then had to climb in somewhere late on. I had no information to give, so I just had to write something nasty, to cheer the brethren. I want also to write a pamphlet called *The Curse*, and another called *The Pedantry of Hate*. But these won't get done; there's lots to do, as I drill every day, and a night-attack to-morrow, and a whole day on Bank Holiday. The Gerbottles will go soft. They will, and when they do, they will say that, after all, England is a decent place, very German in temper. You see.

It shows how real a thing vulgarity is that German vulgarity will cost perhaps ten million lives, all because they

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Dowdall's name for one of his sons.

<sup>2</sup> *Might is Right*.

said "We are the Ones." Of course the English only looked the other way and said the weather was fine. Then the Germans thought us traitors because we wouldn't have a vulgar quarrel. It's an old story. An indecent war: nothing nationally tragic about it, just vulgar people put back in their place. So one has to think of the splendour of the soldiers.

TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, 17 Dec., 1914.*

I have nothing to do with that row; I always supposed the English language is English, not neolithic; and that all kinds of people talk it. But I have noticed that the only exact portraits of Berkshire farmers whom I know are on Roman coins, and that statues of Roman ladies are so absurdly English that even the Puritanism is there. No French woman is like these statues.

The Romans were here, I am told, for 400 years, so I don't see any difficulty. But all I said was that the English are mixed. I said it in a twopenny pamphlet called *Might is Right*—I'm sorry I haven't a copy left. The Press has it.

In a portrait of eight German Generals with the Kaiser I notice that only two have European faces—the others are Kalmucks. No historian cares for these things or can even see physiognomy. An artist always understands. How should Freeman *see* anything with the eye?

Good luck and a good year!

Did you see the German naval officer's Farewell?—"Good bye, old man; it will always be the same; you will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen."

That's the whole truth.

TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 31 Dec., 1914.*

I must write a line to thank you for your letter. I hope all is still well. We are simple creatures. We cannot steel



ourselves against fate. When and if it comes, nothing that we forethought is of any use. We have to fall back on our simplicity.

This is an absurd nation. Lord Roberts, before he died, advertised for gifts of saddles and field-glasses, and got thousands. Yet we go to war with Germany. I am impressed by Kitchener. He will not be hurried, or send men till they can get value for their fighting. We wait, and must wait, but it means that we are going to win.

If war is a splendid thing, as the German pedants say, why do they show so few signs of enjoyment? Can it be that by war they mean, not fighting, but killing? I am sure this nation loves fighting more naturally than the Germans do—they love peace so much that fighting seems to them horrible unless they win. All the same, some of our gaiety is merely our luck; we have never seen war on our own soil.

I am still quite convinced that the Germans will crack. The original Hun army cracked like ice on the Danube in spring. Not yet; but they will; if we hold fast. "Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better." That is an old English proverb. The ground will not have to be won back inch by inch, after a time. This is idle prophecy. I saw a letter the other day from a young English cavalry officer to his mother. It was a comfort to read. He said "I *adore* war—it is a picnic without the futility; and one never loves men so much as when one is trying to kill them." So somebody likes it, after all. He went out sniping, close to the German trenches, at night, and said, "I had no idea that I could ever look and listen as I had to do all that night."

Our best wishes can change nothing, but there they are. Our children are the wrong age, it is going to be a great world for those who are now 10 or 12. And that great world will be the gift, of those who are now 20 or 25, so the givers are not the wrong age, after all.

## TO MRS. ROBERT BRIDGES

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Jan., 1915.*

I left suddenly, after a delightful time in your verandah with an anthology. (An anthology is like all the plums and orange peel picked out of a cake.) But I remembered the mudholes, and that there was no moon, so off I went. If you had been there, I should have forgotten.

Hilary came home last night for three days full of war doings. It's like a rising from the dead, and we are in heaven for three days.

## TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 6 March, 1915.*

I am honoured by your proposal—you will make it a better work than it was before. What happened was this: the Clarendon Press was without work; and I suggested to them War pamphlets. So when they had produced a dozen or so, they said I must write one, and I sat down and wrote a tirade—not informing, but designed to cheer the brethren.

The only fault about England is that she is not quite awake yet. But that has advantages; a lot of those who have not enlisted are born fighters once they see the need in convincing shape. We shall have a million men, all right, all volunteers, with huge reserves. It's no good talking about them now, but they sing hymns, which no Army has done in England since Cromwell's day. And they all mean death, and have calmly accepted it.

If I speak confidently, it is because the country and the race has been a surprise to us all. We were fond of depreciating ourselves (as a kind of assurance premium.) Now I know that England can't be defeated short of being destroyed.

I had a talk with a man to day, who said the war will be over in the autumn. I said, "Do you mean that England will then be ready to accept humiliating (it would really be annihilating) terms from Germany?" He hardly

understood me. So I said "Then what you mean is that Germany, which is still full of spirit, will be ready to accept complete humiliation by the autumn?" I don't believe this, but it doesn't matter when; that must be the end. The good simple German peasants will have to drink gall, because they never thought it worth while to understand politics. There is something in politics, after all, and in sympathy and intelligence.

I really am immensely pleased that you think it worth while to translate my sermon. As for profits, I want none, and have had none. A penny pamphlet is evangelical or nothing. I'm only sorry to think that I didn't say more of what I believe about France. It's a delicate business, like love. We are not *the same* as you, which is why you can teach us so much. But that's not for the Germans to hear.

If Germany would keep to her *rôle* of the brute, I should respect her in a way. But now she's whining, and I can't stand it. "A defensive war." Brutality might win (I don't know) but lies can't.

The soldiers from the front are sane and delicious; it's difficult to be quite sane anywhere else.

Please tell M. Hovelaque how much I liked his letter about Rheims. It almost burned the paper it was printed on—white-hot.

To L. R.

*Anchor Line, SS. Tuscania,*<sup>1</sup>

20 March, 1915.

. . . I can't write, so I send you a sort of diary. . . .  
*My diary.*

*March 13.* . . . Misty. Saw two destroyers following. Our Boats hung out ready. Walked about and lay down. Dinner at Captain's table, me on his left. Captain did not

<sup>1</sup> He went to America to keep engagements to lecture made before the War.

turn up. Talked after dinner to his right hand guest, one D. A. Thomas, large Liberal Welsh coal-owner, sick of strikes and of the House of Commons where he has wasted 23 years. A decent man, intelligent, and rather vain, but not unpleasant. Money-making his hobby; is going to America to do it.

Calm at night.

*March 14.* Spent the day passing Ireland. Lots of patrol boats with wireless. At night got out of danger zone, and swung in boats. Had a drink with a prosperous Scot, voice of J.M. and amateur gentleman. Decent with bore tendencies. Talked to Captain at meals. A quiet modest Scot, very unpretending. Struck a gem after dinner, the Surveyor General of British Columbia, belonging to fourth generation of Canadians and patriotic beyond words. Full of England as a wonderful place. Said that the young generation in Canada thought England effete and that the Boer War had been won by Australia and Canada, but that that was *all over now*, and the young Canadians know they have to learn from England. Himself very modest about Canada. Said he was disgusted by his first fortnight in England this autumn—the indifference and business as usual, but later saw he was all wrong in his impression.

All this arose from him and me accidentally leaning on the rail and watching 2nd Class passenger skipping roping. He said "They're very gay," I said "Yes; they melt at a lower temperature than we do." This plunged him into delight—he said the whole English character was there. So we had long talks.

Acquaintance with other people only casual.

*March 15.* Still calm, some sunshine. Talked a little to two American ladies who sit at Captain's table lower down. Don't know who they are—just cheery and intelligent and American. No sign so far of Mrs. W. R.—not on board I think. Hear of a Miss Chase who has organised Belgian relief—perhaps she is one of them.

J. M. full of tales about a young Pole who is going

to buy shells for the Russians, and who talks down the armies of Russia, France and England. I have now seen him; he watched everyone, and I think is a bought Pole and a German agent. Told this to J. M. who has no sense. Must talk to this young Pole.

The talk is we shan't get in till Monday. We didn't call anywhere, so I couldn't write.

Food good. Cabin comfy. Nothing to do. Talk of average passenger not arresting. No books to read except one on Courtship of animals.

A silly old man in a grey beard skipped about me tentatively, and at last plunged and interrupted. Turns out to be —— in his dotage. Said he hoped he didn't interrupt. I said I would have a talk with him later on, and he ambled away. This was yesterday, and the talk is not yet.

Have spotted some other bores for future avoidance. Fear there are no loves for me. One pretty lady with a kid—rather like Mrs. B., but with regular, pretty features. One other at another table dressed herself with intent, and is wholly self-absorbed. (*Courtship of Animals.*)

March 16-17. Same old calm. Various drinks. Nothing to do. Nothing to see. I see a good deal of Pickwick (whose name is Dawson) and the Surveyor General. He gave me a piece of Shamrock to-day for St. Patrick's Day.

The Americans are incredible. Immodest is the word, for women and men. They all lay down the law in a semi-intelligent way, which would become intelligent if they were not so perfectly satisfied.

Pinkerton is nothing to some of the men here. One of them asked me about three great Englishmen; the Rev. C. Aked, the Rev. Campbell and I forget who else. He had heard Rev. Campbell preach and said "He's a great preacher. You feel that he's forgiving you all the time." I said that what bothered me was to forgive him. But nothing I say ever affects the talk of Americans. He went on. "He commences with two or three statements, right away, to startle the theological world, and then he just

puts his arms round his audience and loves them into the atmosphere of the Creator."

In the evening a nice old Englishman (Colonel type) asked me to play bridge, to make up four, so I did, for sixpences. I don't know his name, except that his wife seems to be Lady C., and he has been in out-of-the-way parts of the world. She is the nearest thing to an English lady on board this ship—in fact, is it.

At dinner we all sang Tipperary, and then made the band play the Marseillaise, and the Russian hymn, everyone standing up. Thereupon a group of people looking like some nondescript kind of Lithuanian stood up and sang something else. I sat still for fear of getting involved in a standing battle, till I suddenly realised that this was *The Maple Leaf* and these were Canadians, so I leapt to my feet.

My mind is leaving me. I give it no exercise, except to talk to Mr. Pickwick. I can't get going in conversation with the women. They say idealistic intellectual things or dogmatise on politics.

We have just heard of the sinking of the *Dresden*. We get no wireless news, but this reached the Captain somehow and he told me. I ran to find Pickwick as the worthiest to hear it.

*March 18.* Funny thing about Pickwick. He told me to-day how, at the Montreal Club, he was called "Mr. Pickwick." So it's all right. Rather younger than the Cruikshank.

I have founded a Club called the G.M.S. (Guild of the Men of Sin). Mr. Pickwick is the President. The Club meets after lunch and after dinner to drink coffee and liqueurs. Its ablest member is a young business Jew called Rosenberg. It started four strong and was *ten* after lunch to-day. Last night I had to keep the Ex-Governor and Ex-Governess of Barbadoes waiting to play bridge till after the Guild had met.

I had a long walk with the Ex-Governess to-day. Type of Sister Dashy. She told me all the gossip. I asked who

were a yellow-haired ardent lady and a dark man. She said "Not know that! They're the talk of the ship."

She also told me that the shy rather bundling lady (type of Mrs. C.) at my side is commonly believed to be my wife—I suppose because we are never together except at meals. The lady (so I am told) has to be advised to pull up her stockings but no one can be found to bell the cat.

The Cardiff Croesus told me the story of his life today, and how he was almost a peer. He has a steady head, and does not mind. Also, he has a study cabin all to himself.

I pass my day sleeping or reading and then (bar meals) mostly between the Barbadoes and my Men of Sin. These Men of Sin tell me I shall never be allowed to land, because I'm an alien and seeking paid work. Now and then I get a little of my own back from them by guying one or another.

The wind has got up. We shall not be in till Monday morning and it will be a horrid rush for me, as I lecture at Providence (4 hours off by express) that day. If I can't, I hope the Providence people know. But I don't care.

I dreamt vividly of Hiwy the night before last.

*March 20.* Have more friends now. The business Jew called Rosenberg and the professional orator called P. (who described Rev. Campbell) are going to see me through. The business Jew is a genius, and humorous. Someone said that John Burns once declared that no man should have more than £500 a year. Then the Jew: "If there were lots of chickens and eggs, and free drinks, and if women never wanted anything, that would work out all right." The orator screamed with delight when I said that George Ade is the greatest living American writer. "O, tell them that at Brown," he said, "tell them that at Brown! If you, coming as an Oxford professor, tell them that at Brown, I don't know what'll happen!" He says that I'm going to have a good time in America, he can see that.

My latest stand-by is a Wall Street banker called Wade Gardner, who offers me his club in New York to stay in

whenever I like. We have chats. He is pure British, and can't stand neutral philosophy about the war. He advises me to keep my mouth shut on politics. "You do no good talking," says he, "and you can't stand the things they say." So he never plunges into the fray. He has a son fighting. But I fear I can't abstain. The Pole who says he is going to buy shells for the Russian Govt. joined the Wicked Men last night (the Wicked Men are the envy of other circles) and told me that he had a young brother whom he was thinking of sending to Oxford. I said, "You had better make haste, for when the Germans have taken it over, it will all be different." Then he was slow, and enquiring, and thick, and I enjoyed it all right. Not cruel, either, for no-one believes that he is acting for the Russian Govt., quite otherwise. He's a dam sight too dapper, and tells you too much about himself, like a bad novel written to sell.

I had a long talk with Mrs. Chase, who, without a word of German, goes in and out of Belgium and Germany, taking people home. She bearded all the Commandants in Belgium, and always carried her point.

Here's an extract from one such conversation.

*Com.* Have you a permit to leave the country?

*Mrs. Chase.* No, I have not.

*Com.* Who sent you in?

*M.C.* The American Ambassador at the Hague.

*Com.* Did he not advise you to get a permit to leave before you ventured to enter Belgium.

*M.C.* No, Sir, he *commanded* me not to enter unless I could get such a permit.

*Com.* Then why did you come?

*M.C.* I have always believed that German Officers are reasonable people, and since what I want to do will be of use to a great many people and will do harm to no-one, I did not see why they should prevent me.

*Com.* (Laughs.)

She then asked for a permit to visit Louvain and four



other (holy) places, all in one day, to collect children of Belgian refugees now in England.

*Com.* Surely you are aware, Madam, that a permit can be granted for only one place at a time.

*M.C.* Yes, they told me that, but it takes about two hours to see you, and I do not see what good it can do you for me to keep babies crying for two hours on your doorstep while I wait for another ticket, so I thought I would ask for them all at once.

She is a brave woman. Disapproves of the war on both sides, being a mere philanthropist.

The Americans have certainly been wonderful in Germany and Belgium. We don't get in till Monday morning. It's four hours to Providence, and what with Customs, and Health, etc., I think I shall miss my lecture.

I can't write much more on board,—packing, amusements, and a heasy-oasy sea. This will have to be closed before I land.

Finis

To L. R.

*Providence, Weds. 24 March, 1915.*

. . . I'm all right—everyone very kind. Prof. Potter met me on the landing stage on Monday at noon and whirled me off in a train to lecture in the evening. Parties, and O such shaking hands, galore! But I can't dislike it—they are all warm-hearted, like rustic folk. Only I'm very tired, but I shall get better soon. I'm going to lie down in a minute, before I start for Yale, to lecture tonight and come back tomorrow. I had Prof. Potter's "stenographer" yesterday and dictated 20 Letters. Mere heaven, like shell-ing peas! I must always ask for that.

I think the Cunard S.S. Company, N. York, is always a safe address. I will keep them posted.

It's no good talking about America. It's just a place,

like England—houses mostly wood, and you get your boots brushed sitting behind the glass in a shop window. The people here are passionately pro-Ally. It's the blood, they say ; they didn't know they had it, till the War broke out.

### To L. R.

*Providence, R.I., March 30, 1915.*

. . . Everyone here, with hardly an exception, is pro-Ally. Some are even bloodthirsty. There's not much difference between the people here and English people.

On Sunday I was taken out 40 miles to a woodland weekend farm, very wild, 40 miles from here. It was very nice. The only thing I can't learn is the new idea of a rest. Start at 9.0 and motor out, so as to have a "long restful day", spend the day walking and talking, roused at 8 on Monday to walk 3 miles and catch a train back. Still, it was open air ; the houses here are very, very hot inside. And I am gaining courage in asking for what I want. . . .

I am tightening this trip—all over, at Princeton, by about May 6.

I went to Yale and lectured with much acceptance ; also to Harvard and Boston for a day, lunch and dinner in Clubs. My last lecture here is the day after tomorrow. On Good Friday to New York, and then gradually down to Baltimore.

I shall try to come back by the Lusitania if she's still running. If I am kept waiting a bit I shall go back to New Haven (Yale) where they want another visit. I was heavenly comfy there at the Stokes's. (Breakfast in bed ! It set me up again.) Yale is very English.

I want to come home already, but I'm getting the hang of this place, and shall "work it into the channels of my comfort", so it's all right. The trains are good and easy. All stories about everything are exaggerated. It's a sort of kindness which provides for every moment that's the bother, and the habit of showing off a guest.

I'm at Princeton on May 5 and 6, I think. . . .

## TO CYNTHIA ASQUITH

30 March [1915].

I'm travelling and preaching, so I haven't an address. This is from Providence, Rhode Island. After five weeks or so of scooting around, I am coming back to go on with my volunteering.

Hilary was wounded just before I left, on the morning of March 10 at Neuve Chapelle. I daresay Lucie has told you; he hobbled about on a gardener's hoe all day, and enjoyed himself. "It was lovely, seeing the Bosches running like rabbits." His bullets are to stay in him, and are believed to be harmless—except perhaps for weather-twinges in old age. He had seen so much of the sticky, depressing trenches that Neuve Chapelle was a Bank Holiday for him.

I didn't take it hard when he was wounded, but when friends who had a hundred other things to think of (and especially when you) wrote about him, I nearly cried. He is completely unworried and peaceful, same as always. The awful row that goes on all the time in the trenches doesn't get on his nerves. This he owes to his mother.

I have thought of you a good deal, and shall go on thinking.

I can't *begin* to tell about America. It's fierce for the Allies hereabouts.

To L. R.

Riverdale, N.Y. City,

3 April, 1915.

. . . I am in clover here with Cunliffe and his Canadian wife, in an old house in a wood on the Hudson River about an hour out of New York. I finished up in glory at Brown, with 900 people in the hall the last night, and a Doctor's degree and all. But since I got here I realise how tiring my life was there. Those hot houses make me faint. And engagements all the time. . . .

. . . I send you an article on the Caillaux case by a lawyer I met and liked ; and a poem <sup>1</sup> by Chesterton (good) which I didn't see at home. There's a snow blizzard raging outside, but I'm all right.

I see the Transylvania sails on May 8, but people seem to be beginning to fuss about getting a very fast ship, and the Lusitania is too early for me—May 1. I will take advice when the time comes.

You can't think how pro-English New England is. The pro-Gers have a bad time.

I've missed the Saturday Mail, but I have to write when I can. If I ever come here with you, I shall now know how to manage. . . .

I leave here on Wednesday morning to lecture that night on Boccaccio to a Quaker University at Haverford, near Philadelphia. The next day on to The Holiness of Beauty. On the last night here, i.e. Tuesday, I lecture to the School of Journalism, Columbia Univ., where Cunliffe is a professor.

The big bugs want me, and I am to dine with Nicholas Murray Butler and invited magnates after my lecture. I was just *It* at Brown.

Also I am much better since my sleep in this quiet house, and I think I shall get through it all easily enough.

To L. R.

*Maryland Club, Baltimore.*

[*Posted Ap. 9.*]

. . . I am fixing May 8 to start home—Transylvania, I think, but they may change it.

Dr. Welch met me here, and put me into this Club, very nice and restful. I lectured yesterday afternoon and go on again today. People were turned away, so I'm still *It*. C. Spring Rice has asked me to Washington, and I have offered lunch tomorrow. (No lecture tomorrow.) Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> "The Wife of Flanders."

Turnbull and Co. were at my lecture and approved it ; so I have squared the H. of B. They give me a dam Reception tomorrow night. . . . Baltimore is lovely—warm and continental. Dr. Welch gave me a big dinner last night, and I think I ate too much when I was tired. It was all men—whom I liked mostly. I shall stay at the Cunliffe's for a night or two before I start.

A lovely woody place, with squirrels.

Kuno is now deluging me with pamphlets. Perhaps he's coming here just before I leave. I hope so. . . .

The war looks very hideous from here, because one hears so much of the outside facts and so little of the inside. It's the letters from the front that one misses. . . .

American men talk too much in the train—rather like English village women, but more boastful. But the trains are comfy. . . .

#### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*University Club of Chicago,  
25th April, 1915.*

I can't visit you, so just a line. I've been racketed all round America and fed on ice-cream and pickles and clams and all kinds of horrid tuck-shop stuff, and petted and listened to. They are very warm-hearted and My ! they are keen about the war. On our side 9 out of 10.

I daresay you heard about Hilary being wounded. He may be back again now—I don't know. It's pretty awful being here with the Ypres fight on. I believe Lucie is at Rouen. I'm coming back as quick as I can, starting May 8th, I think. I'm glad I came ; they're just hungry to hear from the British side. And so kind ; everyone shakes your hand steadily with firm pressure for about 10 minutes and tells you the story of his or her life.

My script shows how tired I am.

TO C. F. TUCKER BROOKE

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 May, 1915.*

I was awfully sorry not to come back, and especially to miss seeing your wife, but the Atlantic passage was getting more and more difficult, and I thought it best to go off at once from Princeton by the *Transylvania*.<sup>1</sup> We had adventures, but got through all right. My own impression is that the submarine business will get much worse—for a bit, till we have built against it, and will then be collared. The surface ships will win, when we have the right kind and enough of them.

I think it quite possible that you may be forced into war against your best judgment. I hope not soon. We are having a thin time, but we are going to win—though not soon. We are a slack and merciful people, so that the accumulated outrages supply a needed stiffening. I don't think we shall go soft now. I have always thought that America would become pro-German if we were fighting on German soil, and I regard the sinking of American ships as a kind of insurance against that great risk. A good deal of American opinion seemed to me to be, not exactly wrong, but incurably spectatorial. The war was a cinema to them. I was often asked what the "feeling" is in England about the war, as if there were any feeling when you must either get through or be crucified.

The Marlowe paper is admirable. I wish you could stumble on a new mention or two of his name. You deserve it.

TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*Oxford, May 29, 1915.*

. . . Nothing that anyone can say can possibly be half so consoling as Julian's noble poem.<sup>2</sup> No evil could ever

<sup>1</sup> He came home in the "*Transylvania*," leaving New York the day after the "*Lusitania*" was torpedoed.

*Into Battle*, by the Hon. Julian Grenfell.

happen to the writer of that. He is a wonder. He accepted and rejoiced in both the means and the End. He lived in Eternity, which is a manner of living, not a length of life. Our extra days seem poor things. We all pass on fortunately.

Words are no use ; the live glorious complete thing that is a splendid human history is too much for them. It's over ; but there is some standard other than our feeding and breathing, or even than our memory ; and if we could only see it, nothing has perished. Our weakness cries for comfort, and I dare not try to think how you will learn to do without Julian, day by day. But I love to think how lightly he would talk of his own death, if we could hear his voice.

It was the Civil-War Duke of Ormonde who said, when someone offered him pity, that he would rather have his dead son than any living son in Christendom. That is true for you. It's almost true, with very deep changes, for me—I never met or heard of anyone who was so entirely the perfect soldier. He put a new face on War, or revealed the real face of War. . . .

*June 7th.*

. . . I do hope we may have some of Julian's letters, and his poems, in a book. I keep on thinking of them ; it would make a Soldier's Testament. It is not the memory of him that matters, he's far beyond that and above that ; but it's the use of that rare faith on this earth.

There is such a lifting of the heart in every word he writes. Death has nothing to do with him—only with us, and his letters help to save us.

To H. C. WYLD

*Tregenna Castle Hotel,  
St. Ives, Cornwall,  
30 May, 1915.*

Your letter is very interesting. Old Kuno<sup>1</sup> has been going it. All the same, his friends, in turning him down, seem to me (both in the public press and elsewhere) to feel the nobility of their action more than the pain of it. The fact is that the morality frankly expounded by Kuno is the German morality since Frederick the Great. It is the parochial morality of a people who have never been in the wide world. "Cheat the stranger."

I daresay that no German is fit to be our friend. (I don't know—it goes a long way that does.) Anyhow, all I say is that Kuno talks and thinks of his English friends more than of anything else. There is nothing else that he is so much attached to, by what heart he has.

I suppose every German of parts is a Govt. agent. All that I gathered from Kuno is that he is not a paid agent (he has his Chair of course) and that he does not report to his Govt. The last may be a lie, which German morality makes it a duty to tell.

Anyhow, there's no change in Kuno, and no new vices. He was always cynical and deceitful, in a slapdash sort of way. There is a lot of new suffering, which he conceals under the military bonhomme manner. All the very interesting passage you quote about how he is envied, and about the holy cause and so on, is grossly overdone by him because he can't bear to be pitied and knows that he ought to be pitied. . . .

Well, I admit that Kuno doesn't matter—not now. He must share with his nation.

One funny thing struck me—he's the absolute dupe of

<sup>1</sup> While in America W. R. had seen Professor Kuno Meyer, whose methods of propaganda there had aroused some resentment among his old colleagues and friends in England.



official information, just as if he were a wholly uneducated man. That's queer in a textual critic, but it's so.

This war is going to be worse than we know, and those of us who survive it are going to see victory. Then I hope they'll let Kuno go on with his Celtic studies. But who knows what things will be like by then.

O, I must tell you—I made Kuno blush. He was talking very magnificently of the patriot, Roger Casement, so I said “That's all very well for the public, but you know as well as I do that Roger Casement is exactly like X. X.” It was a bow at a venture (and perhaps unjust to X. X.) but it got Kuno right in the neck, and he blushed and changed the subject.

You might tell Elton if it's convenient, about me and Kuno. I don't want to influence you or him, but I do know that if you met him you'd find him the same old thing, and very affectionate.

#### TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*St. Ives, Cornwall, 2 June, 1915.*

Very many thanks for the article<sup>1</sup>—I felt a curious kind of pride that anything of mine should go into French. The charge of stupidity gets truer every day. It is colossal. I feel there must be some meaning in this war—something tidal, that we don't understand. But, for all that I can see, it is all trivial and stupid, as if four million lives should be lost because a vulgar brutal self-assertive man is dissatisfied with his social position.

America was very impressive. They are violently on the side of the Allies not from national predilection but from humanity. I am sure they will be dragged in, against their calm judgment, but inevitably.

This much is good, there can now be no draw, or truce. The longer the war lasts the more complete will be the col-

<sup>1</sup> *Might is Right.*

lapse of Germany. I never understood the praise of Bismarck, who, to my mind, was a cunning, far-sighted brute, and I think that Germany is now going to pay for him. Also for that violent fool Treitschke, whose works I cannot recognise for a product of the human intelligence.

I ought not to talk of Germany ; I have (by choice) never been there ; I can't abide the people ; and except their music, I don't care if their works are lost. It seems to me that they are noisy because if they were quiet we should never give them a thought.

I had an exciting voyage from America. They waited for us at both entrances to the Irish Sea. Two hours before we sailed the news of the *Lusitania* came, and what I liked was that only 7 out of 900 refused the passage. While passengers and mercantile marine officers continue as good as ours were, we shall keep the sea. If we begin to shirk danger, we should lose it. There were lots of women and infants, and they were splendid—quite calm and everyday.

My wife had a tiring and interesting month at Rouen—now we are holidaying for a week.

Best wishes for your sons. Valentine tells us nothing about the Dardanelles, except that it's a great deal to be preferred to the North Sea.

### TO C. H. FIRTH

*Ferry Hinksey, 12 June, 1915.*

I had a Hell of a time in America—in all senses of that phrase. Now I want to see you. I drill most afternoons, so it can't be at once. Would next Friday do ?

Your advice is wanted on *Annals of English Literature*, a new encyclopaedia scheme.

Also, I once planned a thing called Shakespeare's England, now nearly finished. The first chapter, on Elizn. politics, was intended by me to be entitled "The Prince". Various people were to have written it ; they have all chucked or

fallen off. Will you write it? The only other suggestion is Pollard, who is busy and elusive. You would do it best. Leave H. Paul to embalm Macaulay.

I don't know how to influence you; I fancy threats are more useful than bribes. Well, if you don't, I shall have to; which will be troublesome for you, because without doubt you will have to supply me with sober and sufficient authorities for all the statements which I am resolved to make. Long before you (or I) have finished, you will wish you had written that chapter.

What a delightful book Keigwin<sup>1</sup> is. The man Strachey is a find. Also the Johnson Bibliography is a bit of all right. It's funny how all the writers of real scholar books seem to be innocent of University training.

Just let me have a card, will you. If you don't, I shall wander round on chance, but it's a long way, so that I may break something if I find you out.

#### TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 16 June, 1915.*

All right; I'll look the Johnny up. I confess that the company of intelligent conversational neutrals makes me sick, but I'll look him up. They ask you how you feel about the war, and whether you think that Fletcher or B. Jonson was the stronger "factor" in influencing Shirley, who of course would never have written a line if he had not been "influenced" by his mother and his nurse and everyone else. But I'll look him up, and I'll try to pretend it's all right. What's he doing here? Reading in libraries, I suppose, and forming aesthetic judgments. By God! I'll look him up. It'll be all right. They're starting a muni-

<sup>1</sup> *Keigwin's Rebellion, 1683-4, an Episode in the History of Bombay*, by R. and O. Strachey. Published in 1916 in the series of "Oxford Historical and Literary Studies," of which C. H. F. and W. A. R. were general editors.

tions factory here, and if he isn't working in it pretty soon, I'll look him up several times. So don't you worry; I'm glad you mentioned him: I'll do the rest.

Lucie says all the Irish are knaves—she looked up from the newspaper to say it. I think (being old and tolerant) that they are luxuries; and like other luxuries are sometimes more useful than necessities.

Everyone is gloomy about the war. We shall have some successes soon, and then everyone will say the war's over, and then, when it isn't, they'll get gloomy again. This is what the papers like, so as they can excite you backwards and forwards.

#### TO KUNO MEYER <sup>1</sup>

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 June, 1915.*

Thanks for the *Vital Issue*. I suppose you know that Conybeare has written to the Oxford Magazine (rather abjectly) to the effect that his letter was too hasty, and has accused you of printing it contrary to his explicit wish.

Perhaps you may say that after all it was honestly written and so is illuminative. Well, its material points (leaving all the "asses" and "owls" and "gallows" aside) were answered by G. W. Prothero in a letter to the *Times*. I will send you this letter, if you want it, for the *Vital Issue*. But I'll tell you what—the *Vital Issue* won't print it. Case-ment, Henderson, and an anonymous American who blackguards his own country are its great authorities.

The dreadful thing about War is the lice that breed on it. When I think of the millions of simple, devoted, high-hearted people, here and in Germany, who offer their lives for their country, I can't stand the yelping and lying of these jackals. It can't be your taste that takes you among them, so I suppose it is your duty.

There are hundreds of thousands of Belgians here and in

<sup>1</sup> This letter was returned through the Post Office and never reached Prof. Meyer.

Holland who suffer from the queer illusion that their houses have been burned, their old men massacred and their women violated by men in German military uniform. Why not send them the *Vital Issue*?

TO D. S. MACCOLL

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 June, 1915.*

Very many thanks for the delightful ballad.<sup>1</sup>

I was about seven weeks in America (March to May). I found public opinion overwhelmingly pro-ally. Lots of them are ashamed not to be fighting.

The position, I think, is this. There's a very small and, once America goes in, negligible pro-German gang. There's a very large peace gang, including most, perhaps, of the humanitarian helpers of Belgium. The popular feeling against Germany is very strong, but I think it is doubtful whether it is strong enough to save America from an internal split once she begins to lose lives by the hundred thousand. That's the point; and Wilson, I take it, like Gladstone, leans back to test the strength of the shove. Another lot of Americans sunk on another large liner would bring America in at once. The Germans, I fancy, know this, and I guess no more liners will be sunk.

All the same, German method is German method, and I believe America will have to come in. It would be a great help—cotton, finance, munitions (which she would continue to supply), and a reservoir of men willing to be trained and to fight. Also a good little Navy. They are three thousand miles away, and I must say I was surprised not by their coolness, but by their heat. They think and talk of nothing but the war.

The Ballad is a beautiful fake in the get-up.

<sup>1</sup> *A Merry New Ballad of Dr. Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America*, privately printed.

## TO HAROLD COX

*Ferry Hinksey, 17 July, 1915.*

(For your Committee). I hope you will get a phonetic alphabet. You certainly must steer clear of spelling reform, if you are to have a chance.

I want to tell you what I think are the difficulties. There are two in chief:

1. The experts are divided and are not all very reasonable people.

I think they should all be *heard*, but should not vote.

2. This is the crux. I never yet met any one who wanted spelling or alphabet reform and who had a spark of reverence in him.

This language, these words, belong to everyone. You can't change spelling usage, or table manners, or family names, by authority. You've got to win your public. So I think the alphabet, to have a chance, should steal upon the notice of the public where it is of use.

All its predecessors have entered defiantly, attended by proofs of the senseless absurdity of everyone's habits.

The difficulty is to get the alphabet used. Little sets of people using it themselves is the only way. You won't win until the things people have to know, or want to know, are printed in it. I like phonetic alphabets, but I never yet met with anything of the least interest printed in phonetic characters. It's like Spirit rapping—very interesting, if you can stand the monotony and triviality of the things that interest the Spirits.

Anyhow, I hope you will fetch it off. It's absurd, I allow, that I can't tell you by letter how I pronounce *girl*.

## TO HAROLD COX

*Ferry Hinksey, 24 July, 1915.*

Thank you for the documents which I enclose. D. Jones has had a good training in phonetics (Cockney

School) and having come early into the market he supplies it, profitably and fairly. The alphabet they use is an abomination, but I don't know whether Bridges' alphabet, which is beautiful and pleasant, is also practical. Does it allow enough for the law of laziness?

I don't know whether I can be of any use. If I get the chance there's one thing I want to say and I will write it now. I have never seen it noticed, though it seems to me essential. It is this—there is a kind of Platonic ideal pronunciation underlying all daily usage. It is more explicit, accurate and pedantic than anyone's daily speech. Good speech takes liberties, on a basis of ease and friendship. Jones and Co. teach these liberties as a normal standard. That's right enough, in effect (except that it resembles polite slang taught in a Board School hand-book). But of course it breaks down. Ask a perfectly Jones taught foreigner to read an Ode of Keats aloud. It would be too beastly (or comic) for words. He is like a painter who has studied impressionist work, and knows no anatomy.

Or take Oratory. Platform speech is not table or chair speech. One man has several pronunciations and degrees of articulateness. Which is the standard? I say the most personal and articulate, which is softened and quickened in the urgency of private conversation.

The Phoneticians (who really think very little) call these differences Northern English, Southern English, Scottish English, etc. That is to say they all (Mark Hunter included) speak as if dialectal differences were the chief and only differences. This is what makes the attempt to engage their co-operation almost desperate. They don't notice the facts.

Of course the differences (the two sorts of difference, I should say) overlap. The best orators are surprisingly often Irish or Northern, i.e. articulate in speech. A passionate private declaration by a Scotchman usually has some resemblance to an academic thesis. But the South and North formula won't do the trick. All good speakers are on the

average more explicit in pronunciation than all good private talkers. No one is an accomplished speaker who has only one kind of speech. I don't suppose you deny a word of this. But why does no phonetician take any notice of it? Stop a man when he's talking and say, "*How* did you pronounce that word——?" Will he ever repeat, exactly, his talk pronunciation? Never.

The reading of Poetry is, I suppose, super-speech, but it is super-speech of many kinds. Is a man an educated speaker if he can't read ten blank verse lines from Milton without making you sick?

Again, some actors are admirable colloquial speakers, but try them on Shakespeare's good stuff. They can't. I never heard one of them do the actual speaking well—except perhaps Edwin Booth. Yet the average scholarly young man can do it quite passably.

It's no good trying to side-track this issue, you can't get rid of it. *You must teach people a pronunciation harder and clearer than is needed for daily speech.* Then let them soften the edges to taste. This is what happens, and it is a kind of personal scale of expression, enormously various. The man who speaks to his wife as if she were a public audience is matched by the man who addresses a public meeting as if it shared his couch.

The phoneticians are like artists who have argued thus ;— No one can paint the human body well from even the best anatomical knowledge of bones and muscles. The best painters have style and ease. Therefore get a composite picture of Reynolds, Raeburn, Whistler, and compel pupils to copy that. Then they have learnt to paint.

All this, if you allow it, leaves lots of values for the things they attempt and do. But their deadly habit is to suppose that their method is complete and adequate. They are so eager to teach that they have stopped learning.



TO W. MACNEILE DIXON

*Ferry Hinksey, 28 July, 1915.*

That is a jolly little book,<sup>1</sup> chock-full of truth. There didn't seem to me to be much chance of profitable exact investigation into the relation between a man's poetry (a nation does not write poetry) and the club he belongs to—but you do make something of it. My criticisms, or variations, on your theme I will not here set down; they would illustrate all that you say of the English character. I distrust the Art apostles. Henley, a tremendous Englishman, always thought and spoke of himself as an artist, and thought when he was finicking he was doing great things, which was absurd.

At a word from you the dam exam. machine starts. Till that word is given I sleep.

Kuno Meyer has cast me off. This is a change for him. He says he would never have believed that I could be guilty of conduct which would have disgraced the Spanish Inquisition in its worst days. This is because a poor old woolly-witted philanthropist called Conybeare wrote an excited letter to Kuno, who printed it, and when I saw it I wrote to Conybeare (having long ago lunched at his house, and on the whole liking him) gently remonstrating with him for not proving his assertions. Thereupon poor old woolly bleated in quite the opposite direction. But Kuno's anger ("Good-bye for God knows how long") is instructive, and I fear I don't dislike it. There's the printing bill for thousands of copies of Conybeare's first letter, now superseded.

<sup>1</sup> *Poetry and National Character*. The Leslie Stephen Lecture delivered in Cambridge in May, 1915, by W. Macneile Dixon.

## TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Oxford, July, 1915.*

## THE POPE

(A cheerful little poem on Neutrality)

The Pope is in his study,  
And he wipes away a tear,  
For the world is very bloody,  
And he must not interfere.  
O thou who slayest and rapest,  
Take courage ; work and hope !  
For the Pope he is a papist,  
And is thinking of the Pope.

Father Adam in the garden  
Heard the Lord and was afraid ;  
St. Peter got scant pardon  
When he drew his hasty blade ;  
When the good are burnt and spitted,  
And the fair are raped and killed,  
Are not all these things permitted  
That the Scripture be fulfilled ?

Now Flanders is a shambles,  
And Poland is a waste,  
And the papal fancy rambles  
To the nicer points of taste ;  
He keeps the placid level  
Of the turtle and the lamb,  
And when man is turned to devil,  
He does not give a damn.

The Pope, like bolder sinners,  
Must live as best he may,  
And life is full of dinners  
For those who watch and pray ;

We care not if he blanches  
Or fears we do not well,  
Our Faith is in the trenches,  
And the Pope may go to Hell.

Philip read this poem and went and told Louise that "Monsieur a écrit quelque chose dont les dernières lignes sont épouvantables".

TO MRS. WALTER CRUM .

*Ferry Hinksey, 3rd August, 1915.*

Of course I would rather come than anything else at all, and your letter mighty near packed my bag. But I ought to do a job of work, and have spent weeks failing to do it. It's the war. The last three days I've been marching and lying out on the Downs in torrents of rain, and housed in billets. Billets is 60 beds for every 100 soldiers. I was pleased to find that, though stiff, I am, *I think*, all right. It's curious how you begin as a kind of game, and then one and another gets interested and worked up, and before you know it you're in sight of the thing itself. Our manoeuvres were the likeliest war of any I have been in. Weather disregarded. You have to get through barbed wire like a knife, and tear your clothes much or little. It was jolly afterwards,—like so many things. On Sunday (you must hear about Sunday) we drilled for an hour in a field very steep and rough from 6.45 to 7.45. Church parade at 9.30. Out of church at 11.0. Start out for the day, carrying rations, at 11.30. Home about 7.0. Supper, Bed (I had one) at about 9.30, and glad of it.

This is not amusing, I daresay; but it amuses me by the contrast with my life. You do your own boots, rifle, etc.

Church was surprising—really like the early Christians. All one community—no time for anyone's personal susceptibilities—and all keen. I felt I had never been at public worship before. Really, modern evangelicalism

(now, please God, dead) was the Devil. The cult of the romantic soul, with all the melodrama of it.

I shan't make much of a soldier. Fairly cheerful (which you wouldn't think) but that's about all. And now I've torn large rents in the clothes I'm to be shot in.

To resume—you see I have to be in your kind house—

(The warmth of that kind hearth,  
whose sacred ties  
Only shall dim with tears  
. my dying eyes)

—about the end of September. That's two months from now, and you might not stick it, or rather, you'd stick it all right, but I should have to behave better than on a shorter visit, and the question is should I forget? I've noticed, long-distance visitors are always very quiet, useful people. Hell-birds run risks in attempting it. I know the strength of my hand, you would like me even if you were angry with me, and Walter would be constant to me even if he didn't like me. Perhaps even a hippopotamus visit wouldn't break you down.

Anyhow, I'm coming when I've had another few shots at getting something done. The worst of it is, nothing matters—I mean nothing written matters.

I can't go on, for I can't write letters like me. Nor can you; only molluscs can. People like Mme de Sevigné, who was certainly a bore when she was in the room. Luckily she sat upstairs writing to dear everybody. It's like cows, chewing cud. Lions bolt their food.

#### TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*Oxford, August 5, 1915.*

I know the ordinary consolations; they do not seem to me to be quite real. But there is something quite real and consoling, if human nature could take it without ceasing to

be human ; we cannot work it out, that's all. But we couldn't do without Julian's life and Billy's.<sup>1</sup> They are not gone, we breathe them, they are the temper of the British Army at its best. It would not matter even if they were not remembered, they passed on the flame undimmed. The great things seem cold, but they are there all the time, and Julian and Billy believed in them, and had splendid lives. Anyhow, they have made life the little thing it is. Because of them I am ready to say "Take it" more easily than before. What must it be for the people they fought alongside of ? . . .

I do not know how I could stand it. The reason is all right, quite sane and quiet, but the flesh rebels. The reason tells you that you are happy, and you know you are, but it does not fill the long day.

I go limping along. . . . And I am glad to have met and known such soldiers.

#### TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, Aug. 10, 1915.*

Have you seen Julian Grenfell's great poem? The fatalistic verse is true of more things than War—

"Through joy and blindness he shall know,  
Not caring much to know, that still  
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
That it be not the Destined Will."

I do love that "not caring much to know"—a little sensitive movement of pride, in case you should think that danger matters. A sort of aristocracy of the soul.

I wish I could find a job. I was stiff after a long day lying out in the rain. Adrian, who was there too, was as fit as a flea. Five years ago I should have carried him, *Sic crescit ; sic transit*. But what can I do ? I addressed the Parish

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. G. W. Grenfell was killed on July 30th, 1915.

Tea yesterday and told them (what I have not seen said) that England has never fought for two or more reasons in Europe—always for the same reason, and regularly once a century. Philip of Spain, Louis XIV, Napoleon, and now Germany,—all of whom tried to dominate Europe, and collar the ports facing us.

I believe this may be the last act before the centre of gravity shifts East or West. Exit Europe.

There's something depressing and, perhaps wholesome, but humiliating about being parasites on world-movements. The only escape is to tell God, either in prayer, or in superior military and political treatises, what we think of him. "If he has no Christian name, I shall call him Charlie."

Our love to you both. We hear that your wife is a Professor. It was very clever of her never to talk to us at all like that.

O, I forgot. I am shocked to hear that X—— has developed a passion for academic fidelity; X——, whose academic amours disturbed quiet Devonshire parishes, and whose academic offspring were deposited unendowed on the steps of the town halls of northern England. Please tell him how shocked I am.

First we talked about the wickedness of war, then we talked about the purification of war, now we are going to get it. It will be queer to listen to the failing voices of those who really thought that their talking about it was the thing itself.

I read to Lucie the great American poem, "I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier," etc. She merely said, "The Americans are really too disgusting."

TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 17 Aug., 1915.*

It only needed saying, as you said it, and the truth of it was clear. So I must "polish my sonnets," like Gautier in

the siege of Paris. Also I am preparing "broadsheets" for the trenches, to be worked by the *Times*. It's better fun than I knew. I wish you would send references of anything that occurs to you, from bits of the Book of Job to accounts of a prize-fight. No standard except "good of its kind." We shall blossom this week or next. I covet enormous variety. 1500 words is the top limit. The things will sell in packets. I have just put in some extracts from the 18th. Cent. Life of Elwes the Miser—a splendid work. There is room for everyone's pets, except elephants. And (what I didn't know) there is a real demand. They sicken of the parlour bogus excitements that fill the magazines and papers. So, for a time at least, I've got a job.

#### TO CYNTHIA ASQUITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 5 Nov., 1915.*

I can't write about Ivo.<sup>1</sup> When he was last here, he was delicious; I remember how surprised I was to find he had suddenly "grown up." I have thought about danger, often enough, but never thought about danger to him. So I could hardly bear it.

I suppose the old things are true, even if they seem to be of no use. I feel more and more that the dead, not the living are winning this war. They give the future, and won't touch it themselves, because it would spoil the gift. It will have to be a very wonderful future.

I simply can't write to your mother. We all get killed by bits.

#### TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 Dec., 1915.*

I can't talk about Goethe or German authors. I always thought them absurdly overvalued, but the academic world,

<sup>1</sup> Her brother, the Hon. Ivo Charteris, was killed in action on Oct. 17th, 1915.

proud of knowing German, would have pointed out that I don't know German, if I had called Goethe a pensive old uncle. And now my views sound like war-bias, which they ain't. Anyhow, they do nothing we don't do better, except Heine, whom we could have fast enough if we treated Jews as they do.

They are going to be beaten far more completely than any one war can beat them. The worst of it is, we shan't see more than a little of it.

The present row is the outbreak of the governess in the human family. She has worked hard, and kept her things in order, and cheated and lied, and thought about her own romantic soul and hard lot, until she has gone mad and intrigued with the Tweeny and the stable-man to oust the family. She'll be carried out kicking I hope ; but if not, at any rate she will be doing her old work at lower pay when things settle down. No one will take much notice of her, and she will lick the boots of anyone who speaks to her kindly. It's sad, if one had time for it. She might have been a good woman if they had kept her away from the books and the science classes. See what comes of the great University movement, and theses and tabulated offal.

The Germans are cheery swine, I will allow, if they had been kept away from the books of War and Chivalry. I want to write a German Don Quixote. Sancho would be a kindly coarse Saxon. I think the thing should be so carefully ironic as to take in the Bernhardis.

I can't help hoping with all Englishmen, that we shall win and stay unmethodical and bored. I think so. The Germans are superstitious about us. That leaks out. Fancy being panicky about a bluejacket. But they are. They shoot him when he is drowning.

What a hell of a place you live at ! No place can be as Welsh as *it* sounds.

The Welsh are so dam Welsh that it all looks like affectation.



## TO CYNTHIA ASQUITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 3 Jan., 1916.*

You would hardly believe it, but this is a Collins, for our nice visit. I have such a long memory for what I like that I think most my Collinses will have to be written in Heaven. But I want to get this one done on Earth, so as to finish with the writing.

We have everyone in now ; Adrian, who is 17, has taken the King's 2/9<sup>d</sup>.

I keep on thinking of Ivo. We are made to do that, and can't help it. But I saw a military funeral today, and it made me envious. I stood while it passed ; it was solemn, but not sad, and I felt that I would die tomorrow to get the right to have the Union Jack spread over me. It made it seem a kind of luxuriousness to want to go on living. The soldiers are all right, and don't care. It's the patchwork they leave behind that matters. We die by bits.

Goodbye, I can't write, after all. Please give my love to your mother. I wonder if you had many trees blown down. They are lying all about here.

## TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 4 Jan., 1916.*

It is a great joy to hear that your sons are well. We had all our family here at Christmas, which is almost absurdly more than we had a right to expect.

Hardly a home here is not broken. But no doubt our circle was the circle first touched. I could not count on my fingers the friends of ours who have lost two sons.

I may dare to say to you that this war is the redemption of France and England. When I think of France as she is, with no panic, and no monarchist reaction, it seems to me a thing beyond wonder. Here is Republican France—at last ! It has been a century and a half in the making. And our Commonwealth is sure, or, at last, we are sure of it.

I do not look for final victory in 1916. But the remnant philosophy is false. Many of the best are killed, but their mantle passes, and the so-called worst are transformed. I am told that the regiments at the front keep their character, and improve, even when, like the Coldstreams, they have been wiped out twice over. Happiness will be built on the earth that is being stamped on, though it is not for the earth to boast of it. The children are wonderful,—so grave and unselfish. There is the splendour about the war that everyone feels when doctors and nurses, with poor appliances and imperfect science, give their lives to fighting a disease. The disease is a disease of humanity, but its origins are known, and we have it in hand.

TO H. A. L. FISHER

13 Jan., 1916.

I have to take the Chair on Feb. 18 at a stranger's lecture here—but that's not the point. The point is I have no lecture to deliver on your range of topics. I should have to make one from the newspapers, which does not seem right.

I would if I could, for I like Sheffield, and want to visit you and walk on a moor. But I find I can't do set work just now. Two ideas which please me would not do for this turn. One is *Don Quixote*, rewritten to fit German military ethics. The other is a lecture, or letter, to Germans, avoiding all imputation or coloured words, also all self-exaltation. Why is it impossible? I have not seen it done. I admit parts of it would read very ironical, but that would not matter,—for Germans. But your audience I assume will not be an audience of Germans, and I don't know how to get one. Could you bill it "For Germans Only"?

No; the only thing I could do is to make a patriotic speech to give a good send-off to the chap who imparts the information. You give the lecture, and I'll take the Chair.

Poor old Simon finds himself (against his will?) a collector

of oddities. Sylvia Pankhurst, B. Russell, G. Lansbury, G. Cole and others have all settled on him and want to feed out of his hand. If he were a pious, reverent man (which he is not) he would recognise it as a sending of Providence. But I suppose it will embitter him.

I very much want to hear what you think about this War. Firth was stodgily cheerful about it when I last saw him.

TO H. A. L. FISHER

*Ferry Hinksey, 25 Jan., 1916.*

I have thought about it (or I should not have been so long). I don't think I can. After all, I know nothing about Cecil Rhodes except three anecdotes or so. I have no account that I can guarantee. It's politics that knocks me. I can't make a political speech. I'm not shy about what I know. But I'm shy about politics, except for the average human truths which everyone knows. They are good enough to make all party politics look silly, but as between actions I don't know.

The Germans are fools—I know that. For all I know they may be doomed to be the most conspicuous kind of fool—the fool on top. I don't think so, but I'm not teaching.

It's a queer thing, but I can't get away from this. I can't say "You won't succeed, it's impossible." All I can say is "If you succeed, it doesn't matter to me; take it to Hell with you." You will see that this is not an informative lecture. All lectures, at present, should be given in German. A much higher technique is enough for our purpose.

So I can't; I'm sorry. I would if I could. Speech is down in price.

I think the Germans are going to have a much bigger *débâcle* than anyone here realises. But I can't prove it; I can only wait. Presently they will get into a latitude where you can't talk yourself out of the heat. They are not insured; so failure will be failure. Our cause can only be criticised in success; if it fails, it's perfect.

## TO H. A. L. FISHER

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 Jan., 1916.*

You must not say that Germany is going to keep anything worth having. I know how you get there, and that's why the defeat of Germany is going to be the work of the artisans, not of the educated. I like the artisans' slowness in what's called waking up (i.e. getting excited) but they mean business, and I don't think a compromise will be considered.

Burke doesn't seem to me to be an aristocrat (wasn't he the son of a solicitor ?) and I don't see the difficulty, much advertised by John Morley, about Burke and the French Revolution. What he hated (always hated) was theorists, who would crucify a man because it followed from the doctrine. The Germans would, too. But the strength of the French Revolution was not really in the theory, and there, I suppose, Burke was blinded by books. So perhaps we make too much of the German military doctrine ; there's a tide behind it. No-one that I have read has tried to measure this tide. It will not triumph in war, but will it work in peace ? It seems to offer nothing to any helper, so I don't see how it can. The Germans have no friends today except peoples they have frightened—the hook-nosed Bulgarian Jew, the Turkish camarilla, etc. That will break on the doggedness of the Allies—and if they are not dogged, the world is no place to live in.

It's fascinating,—there's no denying that. I cannot escape from the belief that the German smash will be very complete and very ugly. It's peace conditions that determine things, and all the German successes seem to make real peace more impossible. Poor devils ! They speculated on the rest of Europe being low-down crawling creatures, and they are going to lose. Every success of theirs is a nail in the coffin.

## TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 March, 1916.*

I was delighted to get your letter and news. Best wishes for the lieutenant! It's good to hear how keen they are. Our anxieties and fears do them injustice.

I have no qualification for prophecy, except confidence, which has never wavered. It is our Cause which is going to win. That is not a figure of speech; if their reasons for fighting were as good as ours, anyone might win. But a philosophy of victory and profit won't stand defeat and loss. Germany will crack, or perhaps melt. It will be a strange sight. All the facts point this way—even their strategy. They dare not go back. They are afraid of their own people. If it were not impious to talk so, I should say this is a good thing. We are saved from a partial defeat of Germany.

My friend Cannan says that he looks forward with anxiety to the time after the war when Europe will be overrun by a new race of Jews—the Germans, industrious, docile, servile, and no longer militarist.

It may be. They spat on the soul of man, and tried to crucify it. The soul of man will forgive them, and they will be outcast for generations.

## TO F. AYDELOTTE

*Ferry Hinksey, 7 April, 1916.*

I have almost given up talking war to your people. It's a difficult question, and outsiders can't judge, and are liable to give offence. Also we don't want to cry for help, and shan't.

The sympathy between the best of us and the best of you is, I should say, absolute. But the best are dangerous people. Has a great nation ever gone to war on a moral question, where its material interests were only remotely affected? If you do, I think you will be the first. And a nation is a great complex brute; once you get it to war,

you won't keep it to the point. The moralists who call the war won't call the peace. So I am quite willing to believe that it may be America's duty to stand out. It's our plain duty to stay in, so we are very quiet and comfortable. We live on an island at the mouth of the Rhine, and we couldn't live under German rule.

It's going to be all right, I think. We lost more lives in Gallipoli than Germany lost in 1870, but we are going stronger than ever. The Germans have begun to talk international morality: that's a good sign.

I don't mind their brutality half so much as their dirty lying,—not that they hurt us by it. But perhaps they ought to be excused, for if they now said why they really went to war they would look too foolish.

Nations are cattle—it's persons that I like. I often remember my delightful day with you. It seems incredible that it was only fifteen hours. Kindest regards to you both.

#### TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 3 May, 1916.*

I can't be content to pay nothing for your splendid letter except a drowsy old preachment. I can't see how you knew that it was by me,—it only said what everybody says, so I wonder whether B. Richmond or someone dropped a word that started the suspicion. Also I never write for the *Times*: I said I would because Don Quixote<sup>1</sup> seemed a good start for a satire on the Germans, and then, in the end, I couldn't bring myself to mention the Germans at all.

Adrian was here about a month before he went to Sandhurst. We miss him; he did so many useful little things. I have never heard him mention his soldiering ambitions (it's not ambition today so much as devotion) but he was kind of glowing inside, and was very quick and keen in all his talk about soldiering. A handful of his contemporaries and friends are killed already. It's queer to ask for the top

<sup>1</sup> An article on Don Quixote in the *Times Literary Supplement*.

thing from these children, and get it as a matter of course.

His first month is very gruelling, mostly on the parade ground. He says it's necessary because Sandhurst drill is whole worlds better than the drill we see around us. All good soldiers believe in drill utterly. I sometimes meet a moral Johnny or two who says that the courage of the individual is the real thing. But I always point out to them that you can't take a trench alone and that you want to be quite sure that when half have fallen the remainder will form up and go on. Which they won't do till they trust one another almost mechanically.

Samuel Smiles, as a thinker, has lost some part of his influence, since the war.

Hilary and Tine are all right. I can't mention them to about half my friends, who have lost sons. I'm afraid Dick won't miss the war, though it's just possible he may. The nurseries of today are the legatees, and they will seldom think of the splendid generation of youth that broke itself to give them the world.

#### TO THE SECRETARY, CLARENDON PRESS

26 May, 1916.

I have been looking at Boswell's *Johnson*. It is horribly difficult to abbreviate,—or it would have been done, I suppose, long ago.

To keep the *facts* of the life would take up most of the room, and would lose most of the value.

The only way I see is this: The conversations are the best part, on the whole. The worst of it is some of Johnson's best, and most famous, remarks occur everywhere and anywhere. They must be sacrificed. I would begin with his meeting Boswell in 1763, and give the early pages of their acquaintance. Then separate scenes—the meeting with the King, the dinner with Wilkes, etc. etc.

I don't think you can join these with narrative links—the links would be so miserably inferior to Boswell.

So you must put a sort of tabular summary Life of Johnson in front, and then give separate scenes with a title to each. That would preserve some of the merit, intact.

It would hurt and worry me to do it. Every other page something is said that seems to be essential for the knowledge of Johnson. There's a pleasure in making anything out of shapeless material, but it's a morbid kind of pleasure to be had from seeing whether you can make good shoddy, rather than bad shoddy, by tearing up an elegant suit of broad cloth.

I fear it's a publisher's job, not an author's. Why is the short life wanted? Because people can't and won't read. If they could, and would you would only have to print some pages of Boswell as a prospectus, and they would insist on having the rest. The whole book can be read in a day or two, and then, however often you go back, you find some new thing. But there would be no harm in *Selections from Boswell* I suppose. No immorality, I mean.

It's because certain scenes in Boswell are famous that almost every current statement about Johnson is a lie. The whole book is true. What the popular rendering misses is Johnson's amazing intelligence, which, while he lived, made what he thought of you more important than what you thought of him. Mrs. Knowles laboured hard to get him to reverse his judgment on Miss Jane Harry—"an odious wench." The deadly thing in it was a good judgment.

I began jotting down page numbers and soon saw that I was making a rotten book. If you will choose a text, cheap and popular (*Everyman*?), I will pencil passages that *must* go in. Of course it will be all high colour and piquant sauce. The long serious passages, letters, detailed movements, unwitty conversations, are really essential. It's there that you find Johnson saying something that proves that you must go to school to him.

You needn't print from *Everyman*, but I will mark some things in it.

The quaint old man, very lovable at times, and surpris-



ingly shrewd, who amuses school mistresses by his Eighteenth Century prejudices, will get a new lease of life from you. I can't help that. Johnson must wait. Boswell had a quick eye for the eccentricities and paradox, which he exaggerated, in all affection. To correct him, you would have to make him duller.

I don't see what I could profitably do except perhaps a preface, to warn readers off a *conceited* reading of Boswell. Shall his strength slay thy worm in Hell?—Go to! Cover thy countenance, and watch, and pray.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 May, 1916.*

Tell P. I don't mind his being systematic, but I'm damned if I could know him after he takes orders. I have forgiven orders to the young and foolish before now (though of course to take orders advertises that you don't want your friends to say what they think in your presence.) Tell P. he's not a religious man. *This I know*, it's not an opinion. Tell him to come (not go) to Hell, along with a set of decent coves. Tell him not to go blacklegging it along with the spiritual police.

I won't see P. after he takes orders. I'm willing enough, but I couldn't. You can't help a gentleman who's found salvation. And by God, he can't help you. But I should like to dine with him before we part for this world and the next. Perhaps in the next after that, when the Heaven and Hell Stunt is played out, we shall meet again.

I'm told there's a funny little separate Hell for those who take orders for wrong reasons. It's not a tragic Hell (as the clergy suppose), it's a comic little Hell where everyone to all eternity makes jokes that don't come off.

TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 10 June, 1916.*

I am so glad to hear that your son at Verdun is still safe. We are all right too, though there are not very many fathers

of sons to whom I can say it. The Jutland battle was a good deal better for us, I think, than has yet appeared. Beatty held the whole German fleet for hours, till our main fleet came up. It seems clear that the Germans suffered enormous losses. We are waiting for the Jellicoe report. But the best thing is that our sailors have now made acquaintance with the Germans, and fear them (in a legitimate sense) less than they did. We are not going to lose the sea. I can't help marvelling at the prosaic cheerfulness with which the sailors die. The men from a destroyer, all thrown into the water, with no chance of rescue, cheered another destroyer that went past them at top speed, and one shouted "Goodbye, old chap ; put in one for me." It seems to be a part of the unwritten law of the Navy that there shall be no poetry—verbal poetry, I mean. And it's a great pleasure to find them all at least as reckless as the Elizabethans. "A seaman is useless unless he is resolute to the degree of madness," as Sir Edward Howard said in the Sixteenth Century.

The nastiest thing about the War is not the brutality of the Germans, but their low deceit and brag. They are brave, yet they lie and boast like cowards, or rather, their vulgar government does. I think our chief feeling, in desiring peace, is to get a chance of having nothing to do with them.

Napoleon said that that side wins the battle which can go on when it is exhausted. Battles are won by dog-tired men, who thought they could do no more. Our trial is upon us, now, just before the turn of the tide.

#### TO HAROLD COX

*Ferry Hinksey, 10 June, 1916.*

It's not my job, really. I signed because I saw the names of several of my friends.

I see what Bridges means. The allusion to the War reads as if it were written by someone who has heard of the

War, but has nothing to do with it. The Americans often speak of the War like that.

I didn't ought to have signed really, because, although I desire the end, I think the means wrong. You don't want a Royal Commission or Committee. The bother is to invent the alphabet. If private experts could meet and *agree* and declare, they would soon compel notice. The pompous Committee would only record disagreements, until the first step is taken. So I don't think Asquith should be bothered about it till things are riper and there is some well-considered and heavily backed proposal.

I foresee a time when anyone who has none of the morale or tradition of this people will be able by good phonetic teaching to masquerade as a true-born Englishman. I don't object, but I can't think of it with enthusiasm. The War first.

I read you yesterday on Free Trade. I suppose you're right. The people I distrust are the people who hold a Creed about trade, and think their moral and intellectual credit is bound up in loyalty, as they call it, to their Creed. It's amazing that there should be such people. They call themselves Tariff Reformers, and Free Traders. They are pedants, and pedants of a single kind.

I can't help to invent that alphabet.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 11 Sept., 1916.*

I am sending you a privately printed book, because I think it will amuse you. It is letters and memories of Julian and Billy Grenfell and of the family. Including the Sayings of Imogen between the ages of 3 and 10 or thereabouts. It's full of people and names that you know and is half private, so that it really is rich in confidences.

Julian's letters from the war are wonderful.

The worst of it is I can't get another copy so I suppose I ought to have it back some day. I wouldn't send it, to give

you that trouble, if I didn't feel sure that it will amuse you and tickle you and give you a delightful exercise in criticism.

I hope you are pulling round and not living under a cloud. It's easy to be calm when one thinks, but the rabbit part of one is still there, with all its quick fears. And as it gives us some of our best pleasures I suppose we can't escape its pains. But the rabbit eats quite happily when it has just had a squeak for its life. We're not so good at that, so we have to make it up by thought.

I hate dangers that give notice, but I do believe you will be all right, and are all right anyway.

#### TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 11th Sept., 1916.*

I have been reading the book so much, a bit here and a bit there, and I think it would be unfair not to tell you. It tones up the heart and mind in all this suffering. There is a queer sense of stress through it all, as if nothing could possibly be enjoyed too much. If there was any mere moping and rumination, it has left no trace. Sing well, for you may not sing another—that runs through it all. It seems miserable not to put it on one side, and fight, for it is a splendid preparation.

I wish I knew—

What were the topics of argument between you and Julian.

Whose death did Billy desire, in an amiable sleepy kind of way.

I don't think that any poem ever embodied soul so completely as "Into Battle." The other poems are good, but not in the same world. This thing has hardly ever been done—an anthology of the adequate poems on real things would be tiny.

Remember I didn't know who wrote it when it first knocked me down. It was like a dream come true. Those who glorified war had always, before this, been a little too romantic; and those who had a feeling for the reality of war

had always been a little too prosaic. It can't be done again.  
I was so thrilled to-night that I had to scribble this.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Dalnotter House,  
Old Kilpatrick, N.B.,  
21 Sept., 1916.*

"No one counts for more than one" is a modest creed. But everybody counts for one, and one is an awful lot, seeing that human happiness (as the old sergeant remarks of the suffering of the wounded) is "not cumulative." But it's no good trying to preach you into self-importance, and certainly the world has faded a bit of late. I seem to have seen it all. Mankind are very silly and vain and conceited and self-devoted and brave and kind and inalterable, so that if there were not an end of it all an end would have to be invented. Meantime I like my habits. . . .

And the pathos of the young and their generosity with their lives, is almost intolerable.

TO W. ROTHENSTEIN

*Ferry Hinksey, 25 Oct., 1916.*

I haven't seen the frieze, but I expect it's all right. You should have had an inscription below on the frame. I don't altogether blame the public, for the mugs and bigwigs in the picture have no very obvious business except to look distinguished.

My portrait<sup>1</sup> is incredibly good. I now believe in Art.

I wish we could come back to your farm. Things roll on, and more of the young men are mopped up. But I do begin to think that 1917 is perhaps the year of victory.

<sup>1</sup> Frontispiece.

## TO ROBERT ANNING BELL

*Ferry Hinksey, November, 1916.*

## POEMS ON ART.

## I. THE ARTIST.

An Artist is an awful man ;  
He does not do the things he can ;  
He does the things he cannot do ;  
And we attend the private view.

(The remaining poems of this series will be produced monthly till Art is finished. Subscription for copies, 7/6 a number, payable to the above address.)

[*Later, undated.*]

## II. THE SITTER.

The perfect Sitter merely sits ;  
He has no need for taste or wits ;  
He must not run or loop the loop ;  
He sits and is the Artist's dupe.

## III. THE WORK.

The artist working may be fun ;  
Not so the work when it is done ;  
You cannot keep it on the floor,  
And very soon it is a bore.

## IV. THE ARTIST'S HOME.

The Artist and his suffering wife  
They lead a horrid haunted life ;  
They live with all the things he made  
That are not wanted by the trade.

[*Later still.*]

## V. THE BUSYBODY.

Although the world is fair to see,  
The Artist will not let it be ;  
He fiddles with the Works of God,  
And makes them look uncommon odd.

(The subscription for the first five numbers of this series (£1 17s. 6d.) is now overdue and should be paid at once. Prices will be raised after Publication.)

P.S.—Artist's Proofs prove nothing.

VI. THE ARTIST. HIS INHERENT UNREASONABLENESS.

The Artist uses honest paint  
To represent Things As They Ain't ;  
He then asks money for the time  
It took to perpetrate the Crime.

TO ELEANOR CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 Nov., 1916.*

I'm glad you liked the book. It's a bit of all right. I adored Julian. Did you see him in white satin, a page, and then, not so many years later, that strange, grim, peaceful, stern face ?

When I read the proofs I rather thought the enjoyment of everything excessive. But I don't now ; it was quite natural. Julian went through the war, and out of it, not with humorous resignation and cheerfulness, but with acute joy, to the last drop. They were brought up to enjoy things, and they justified it. Perhaps they knew, in their blood, that the time was short—"if this be the last song you shall sing." So much joy, and no softness, it's wonderful. They were lovely animals. I remember bathing with them at Taplow. As I was contemplating a solemn dive, there flashed, running along a high spring-board, far above the water, Monica, a figure of perfect beauty. She hurled herself upwards into the air, curved downwards about ten feet out, and went into the water like a minnow. I had never seen anything like it. (I only learned later that she had ten swimming prizes.) That afternoon she had been sitting at tea, very dunchy and modest, not called upon to speak, quite contented, and unremarkable. Then this transfiguration.

I seem to have been spying on the family. I should never have guessed at "Casie." But there she is, in the book, and no mistake about her. No letter by her, either—how decent!

Your letters come quite easy to you, and always fall on their feet. Adrian is at Hull with the 3rd. batt. Leicestershires. He was a week at home after Sandhurst—an almost intolerable pleasure. He will be drafted out. If I feel weak, he doesn't. You should hear him speak of the pacifists.

### TO ÉMILE LEGOUIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 24 Nov., 1916.*

I was so glad to get your letter, and to hear that your eldest son is doing so well.<sup>1</sup> The anxiety, as you say, of being only an ear at the telephone is enormous, and we are liable to suffer from what I call "back-parlour miasma," while the men at the front are gay.

Adrian has just joined his regiment. He is 18, and only half the strength he will be. But he is a trained officer, so I don't suppose he will be long in England. He doesn't think himself too young to fight. As for me, I think I could take real pleasure in this war if the first line on both sides were people of our age. I should like to get up a team of 100 Professors and challenge 100 Boche professors. Their deaths would be a benefit to the human race. But this business of sending forward young creatures, on the threshold of life, to be maimed and killed, is sickening. Don't mistake me; I don't want peace. Germany can be cured only by ennui—in an acute form. I don't doubt that the day will come when the sentimentalism of brutality (which they call *Real politik*) will be wildly unpopular in Germany.

There is no mistake about this people. If we win, we shall be shaking hands with Germans, I suppose, in a few years. If Germany gets solid gain out of the war, then they

<sup>1</sup> Professor Legouis' eldest son had been severely wounded at Verdun.



must destroy us, nationally and individually, or we shall destroy them. It is the way they have waged the war that has made the situation. I can speak only for my own race, and I don't think it extravagant to say that German doctrine and German practice will not be secure till that race is wiped out. We shall not compromise. So that, if I could afford to be philosophical, I do think that even a Roumanian defeat would only be another German commitment, increasing the final crash. The poor puzzle-headed fools must already be wondering why victories are so uncomfortable.

I saw an admirable letter from Hugo Charteris, the eldest son of Lord Wemyss. He has since been killed in Egypt. He wrote to his parents on the death in action of his younger brother, advising them to "write off" the whole of his generation, and concentrate on their grandchildren. "As for us," he said, "we must think of nothing but the future of the country and our own happy past." I like that; it is not really sad.

#### TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 21 Dec., 1916.*

Lucie has gone off with Hilary and Margaret, to see him off to France on Xmas Eve. I and Philip are left, and now we are telegraphed for, to go and spend Xmas in London with various relatives. We are both very angry. We meant to kill a goose. But we are going.

I went and lectured on the War to a lot of Colonial minister and Civil servant Governors. It was good fun and was much esteemed. I will send it when printed to P., who reads, I hear.

When Lucie told Philip that I was not paid for it, Philip said, with a face of horror, "Not *paid*! not *paid*! Then how the devil are we to keep the house together?"

Next time, thank Heaven, I am paid, for an attack on Romantic Poetry to be delivered at the Royal Institution,

Albemarle Street, on Thursday, Jan. 18, at 3.0 p.m. Come and hear it! We will have tea when the antediluvians have crawled away.

But I expect you are still laid by the heels. Still a lecture would do you good, and think what it would be for me—among those prehistorics.

TO GEORGE GORDON

*The Hangings,*

*Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*

28 Dec., 1916.

I send you a little book.<sup>1</sup> The best of old Johnson is that (except about death) he had no miasma. R. Bridges says he was a one-eyed man. But then so many of the two-eyed men, like —— and —— and Ruskin, though they enjoy the use of a fine rolling liquid orb for romantic and poetic purposes, in addition to the little pig eye that we all use at home,—so many of them, I say, are martyrs to miasma. With old Johnson you get away from medicine bottles, and fans, and mew-cat artificial voices, and spiritual affinities. And the little pig eye does wonderful work.

It's a pity that so many of the two-eyed men are minxes.

Read Johnson on War (May 16–31). It's amazing—all true today.

TO LADY WEMYSS

*Ferry Hinksey, 28 Dec., 1916.*

You wrote me a heavenly letter, in answer to mine to Lady Letty, whom God bless. I meant to answer it, and now I can't, for I have to get back on to the old subject that has so often exercised my pen, and to say that we shall arrive on Friday next week, late in the afternoon at Little Toddington. We are glad, though when I am shaken out of torpor and routine, I wish I were with Ego and Ivo. I don't know why.

<sup>1</sup> *The Johnson Calendar*, by Alexander Montgomerie Bell, 1916.

The greatness of England seems a little thing ; it's much more profound than that. Something more like Christianity, unintelligible and compelling. (I'm not tired of life, so it must be a real thing.) The first time I stayed at Stanway I studied all Ego's books (he was in America) in the room at the end of the passage. Another time, in the room last on the right-hand side, I took note of Ivo's books—very young they were, at that time, chosen mostly by others, so not at all a portrait. Now they have carried through, clean and splendid, and I am going back to Little Toddington. Everyone his own humility—I am very glad ; but the splendour of them dazzles me a little. You don't have to think of them, even ; they are in the tissue of thought. If you could prove that they did this or that, and that it was worth the sacrifice, it would be simple common sense, and not the splendour that it is. It's a kind of transfiguration, with a meaning far greater than can be expressed in the future prosperity of this or any country,—not that they haven't saved and exalted England, but England was made for them ; not they for her ; and their lives are among her real achievements. Which you know ; though no-one can understand it. We need comfort ; they don't. It reminds me of what Renan said (and it was the best thing he ever said) that if we could have the meaning of death explained to us, only the pure in heart could stand it.

#### TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 30 Dec., 1916.*

I have lots to say but I can't begin, letter-writing is a kind of spiritualism, you knock the table a lot and concentrate your mind, but you can't be sure that George is really there, and he's very unlike his old self when he just sat about and was devilish comfortable. So I simply can't carry on the séance, if you won't scratch three times to mean "Yes." Tapping is all right, but it's best done at a booking-office window.

To E. V. LUCAS

*The Hangings,  
Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,  
7 Jan., 1917.*

I have few rarities, but I send you a page of the original MS. of one of Scott's novels.<sup>1</sup> I forget which. The genealogy of this page is recorded on the back. Robert Carruthers was the maker of Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature, and was thick with all the Scotch notables. Mason Jackson was Art Editor, for many years, of the Illustrated London News, and gave the page to me.

What is its auction value? I have no idea. The quotation from Goldsmith should hoik it up a shilling or two.

Barrie's line of appeal, in this morning's *Times*, carries far—too far I think. It is the Caller Herring argument, not fish, but men's lives. It's a bit theatrical—the fishers don't think in that way. They think of the fish. God bless me, everything is men's lives, we are so frail.

I wish I had given this relic to you years ago, but I didn't think of it. But perhaps you don't care about ownership. I am not an enthusiastic owner, so these things don't often come my way, and, when they do, they pass on again.

Why not make an appeal at the auction to those who come to bid? After the auction ask them how they dare be so unfeeling as to buy these luxuries when the money would save men's lives? It's not our books, it's their money that's wanted. Then they will give the money, and you can have the Scott page.

To JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 Jan., 1917.*

Hilary is only gassed by a gas-shell; he is in hospital at the base in France, and will soon be well. I fear he won't get leave. It was a great relief; at first we only heard he

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. M. Barrie and Mr. Lucas were collecting books and MSS. for the Red Cross Sale at Christie's.

was wounded, which may easily be as bad as killed. I enclose my last sermon <sup>1</sup>—to the Royal Colonial Institute—in proof, more in gratitude for your letter than in the hope to do you good. It's all true, but you know it. There's no bloody thing in the world for me to do, so I preach about once a year. I hope you won't think it blatant, and I hope it conveys the right atmosphere of contempt unaware of itself. There is no doubt that's how we feel. The Germans would have to win for our contempt to become fully visible.

I look forward to forgetting them.

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 11. i. 17.*

My Lady Elcho, who is now Lady Wemyss, said rather a delicious thing about Julian Grenfell. I said that he, and perhaps two others, were all that I had ever heard of who liked this war, just as it is,—to whom it was bread and meat and wine and father and mother and betrothed. She said "Yes, of course it was Julian's war. We don't want to be horrid about it, and we're glad he had it, still—perhaps some of us—it does seem very expensive for dear Julian's treat." I love that, partly because it's a noble tribute to Julian.

I went and spoke the other day to a Royal Colonial Institute. I will send it to you in a pamphlet. It contains a tribute to the English (not British). Being mostly not English, I can do it. There's a lot of nonsense talked about British.

I wish I could hear that you are in a fair way and don't suffer. We can all think justly when we are exhilarated and heated by thought, and the devil, who hates to find us thinking justly, starves us and teases us to make us pusillanimous. I don't think he has much success; we sometimes go on thinking justly on quarter rations.

<sup>1</sup> "Some Gains of the War."

I don't care a bit who's Prime Minister. The people have made the war their own, and mean to see it through. We must have some little troubled politician sitting cocking on the top ; and the troops like a mascot. If Lloyd George is modest, as perhaps he is, he will do all right.

### TO LADY WEMYSS

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 Jan., 1917.*

We loved being at Stanway, which goes on quietly, like a tree, though there are no birds in any last year's nest. Sometimes I am haunted (always have been) by a sense that there is nothing to fuss about,—no hardship, I mean. If we were offered a little spell of life, with all its friendships and pleasures, and were told that it was that or nothing,—how we should crowd up for the chance of a ticket ! There's no theatre like it. Twenty years (say) of rapture and excitement. Yet how hurt we are when it's over. We know it's sane not to be hurt, but we can't help it. I think perhaps we can keep it a physical hurt, and the soul free. Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt——

The worst of that wisdom is that it's of no use at all while there's work to be done with a fire escape.

I loved seeing David and Martin holding their glasses with *both* hands. And the philosopher Michael. Please tell Lady Letty that I have dropped into the habit when I enter a room of introducing myself by saying, " Suppose I was a TI-I-I-GER ! " It brightens social life.

She has more to bear than I can conceive, but she will be all right ; she has a wonderful share of the beautiful tramp temper that takes the road as it comes. No hard-bitten little schemes or theories, which are like crockery, not only do they break in a smash, but they cut you. It's best to travel without them.

It would be a nightmare to die if we left no laughter and singing behind us.

Katia was a great fight. It's those fights (the odds against us) that have really daunted the Germans. So far as the nation and the cause is concerned, it is wholly well that they did not withdraw.

### TO LADY WEMYSS

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 Feb., 1917.*

You must do that book. This war is not, as we sometimes think it, merely the fatigue and trial of today : it's the war, very likely, of a thousand years, and all the children for centuries to come will be fed on it. Ego and Ivo gave their lives for us, quite straight and simple, and the record ought not to be left to slips of paper, which get lost.

The wonderful young ! Would they have become just the bothered harassed, tolerant, habitual old that we all become ? They were not born for that. Could Julian ever have been an elderly clubman ? A whole generation saved from having to combat the slow sapping and ruining of selfishness. They can laugh at selfishness which we hardly dare to do. The laugh is on their side, as the Americans say, after all.

Mons, Gallipoli, Katia, and such places will be *the* memorial places of the war, even if we take 50,000 prisoners next week.

I now realise that the Cavaliers won the Civil War and bequeathed their temper to England. The Puritans collared the Parliament, which was what they wanted. They have it still.

There's nothing more to say except love to your household.

## TO CLEMENT WEBB

*Ferry Hinksey, 18 Feb., 1917.*

I will do anything I am asked to do, with pleasure.

If this plan <sup>1</sup> is meant to give a chance to an intelligent boy educated in "modern" subjects, it is too dry and cramped. It is a modern school modelled too exactly on the ancient school. The matter of modern thought is made up largely of science and what is borrowed from Science. A quick-witted "modern" boy knows what Mendelism is and what the radium emanation is. These are not toys, and to include no paper that can permissibly mention them is like excluding philosophy from Greek.

That's the worst of it. Many of the science men and many of the classical men are exact, restricted and incurious. They don't see into each other's trenches. But the general reader, and intelligent youth, live in No-man's Land. These papers seem to me like the attempt of one trench to make sympathetic rules for life in the other trench.

## TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 May, 1917.*

I tried to think of a motto in bed, but couldn't. There's a danger of saying something that events make foolish. Why a motto? Names are the things for Tanks—graceful names like Amaryllis.

Thank you ever so much for the book cover. I fear that all books that really do their work get used up. I notice that when readers turn by natural development into fanciers they become immune to books. Darwin tore any pages he wanted out of a book and put them in his pocket. Wordsworth cut standard books with the butter-knife. A book protected is a book dead. Did I ever tell you that a friend

<sup>1</sup> For a school of Philosophy and Natural Science. "Modern Greats" as now established in Oxford deals with Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.



of mine had a 1st. edition *Vicar of Wakefield*, hot from the press, it seemed, grey paper covers, edges unopened. An American offered him £1000 for it, and he took it. If the edges had been opened it would have been three or four hundred at most.

Term is on here, and I lecture, which seems absurd. I sometimes see some Londoners, who are mostly full of dark rumours. If there's anything to eat in July the Harmsworth Press will be disgraced.

I want to come to London but it can't be just now. I think I forgot to say that the cover is a godsend though the book bears some marks of hard reading, for I have lent it to fit clients.

I'm glad you like my yawps. I believe they are used for America.

You will hear from me again.

TO MRS. LINDSAY

*Ferry Hinksey, 21 June, 1917.*

Now that my visit is taken and paid for, correspondence is free again, and every letter is a present. An anti-Collins, or Super-Collins, is a very delicate compliment. I'm glad to be liked by X. but I would give it up gladly if I could get him to stop hating. What is the matter? Is it that the French are spiteful? The English certainly are not. He seems to have the awful power of enjoying other people's suffering.

We have had a rat here all this summer, as big as a rabbit. Today Louise, our major-domo, told me it had been found dead with some kind of deformity on it. (It has never been in the house.) She rejoiced. "It was four years old," she said, "think of that; it is good that it is dead." I said "I'm rather sorry for it, Louise; it must have had a horribly lonely life." She said "That is just what Miss Philip says, but I, I am glad."

I am sorry that X. is so glad about diseased rats and their tragedies.

I'm pretty sure to come back when my present examining job is over. But you must choose some time when I can come in my squalid simplicity with no spare clothes. Bags and cabs—no ; it makes trouble all round and looks absurd on the Berkshire plain. Motors are not for me ; besides, they are too highly civilised ; you can't travel properly in a motor without parasites and parasols and a parakeet and a paramour. But my simplicity is so squalid and my squalor is so simple that you will have to guarantee or mesmerise any fellow guests. If they talk smart the tramp will rise from his settle and go out. I don't mean that any guests of yours are likely to talk smart, except when they are tired or ill. Some people talk clever from fright.

I got into an awful row with Mrs. M. A. for showing her article to you. O, I told you. She is not fat enough to live in peace.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

Oxford, 6 July, 1917.

All the girls here always allude to centuries, in writing, thus, C17, C18, &c. Before I absolutely drop on this practice I ask you, is it perhaps harmless ? The worst of it is, it becomes magic, like most symbolism, and encourages them in their habit of thinking of centuries as Scents. I want a short law like the Daylight Saving Bill to say that till further notice the 16th century shall begin in 1550, & so on. That would diddle a lot of silly patter. I think I'm going to forbid the word "Century".

Roll up with the book—I do want to see it. I was overjoyed to hear from you. Did I send you my last, and final, pamphlet on *The Faith of England* ? Anyhow, I'll send you a print of Rothenstein's chalk drawing of my head—a good piece of work. Just to keep the pot a-boiling.

The War is going to be All Right, my son. The English Language is safe to be the world language. The very Germans will treat their own tongue as a dialect. Goethe will be like Dunbar, or perhaps Burns. Scandinavians and Latins will cultivate English. German is a shotten herring. It's all right. No-one, that I know of, has touched on the language point, but it is what matters. Their only chance was to bully their language up to a cock position, and they have failed. On its own merits it hasn't a chance. You can't make a German translation that's better than the original, like some of our translations.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 26 July, 1917.*

I often used to wonder why you wrote so much (in your published works) of what you dislike and so little of what you like. These poems are the answer, the standard that makes fussy little things seem squalid.

I can't criticise them, and more and more I can't criticise them, and more and more I can't criticise words at all. If words become immortal it's not because they are sincere (broken, inaccurate words are often that) but because they are a standard size, and fit a thousand human creatures, and wear well.

I wish I could remember what I said about you and Tine. That's the worst of it, I never remember what I say. "Plenty more where that came from" was my line. So it will be rather desolate and wilted when there isn't plenty more, and I haven't saved up what there was. But I dare-say I shall die before I'm reduced to tinned provisions.

Your poems are very delicate. Delicacy is a lovely thing. Not at all like decorum, which is the delicacy of the indelicate.

(It has just occurred to me how awful it would be if there

were a delegacy of the indelicate ; and how likely it is that there are several such delegacies.)

It is fairly easy, after all, writing to you, because I don't have to explain every bally thing, like a legal document. Indeed, if you weren't so blooming feminine you would think exactly as I do, and I shouldn't have to write at all. But there it is, there's always a something.

O, I was going to make you a list of your first week's callers.<sup>1</sup> But it would be cruel. The whole, undivided, eternal Church ! You must help God to save the Bishop.

#### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Ferry Hinksey, 24th Sept., 1917.*

I meant to write to warn you about the journey, but it was no use, for you would not have got it in time. We had a strenuous fourteen hours, but we managed it. I hope you fetched Harrogate all right. I draw a veil over our experiences.

You can't think how much better we feel for your nice house. The worst of it is that no-one would know how grateful and delighted we are because Lucie is a Stoic and I behave so very wilful and bad. But we are bubbling over with pleasure and thanks, all the same.

Everything here began again, just as if we had never left.

The Oslers have lost their only son (and only child). It will freeze her up. Yet no-one can ever learn to sit light to their children, to treat them as casuals that have dropped in for a short time.

Goodbye and a million thanks. Everything feels as if it were for the last time, these days.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Dowdall and her family were moving to Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> This proved to be his last visit to Dalnotter.

## TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 4th October, 1917.*

How pleased Julian would be with these three last victories, which begin to put the War right. It is because he and his like believed in them, against the odds, that we have them now. I can never think of him except as a complete life that went up in flame. Lately, several times, I have had to do with other losses that are less typical and more tragic. Sir William Osler's only son, for instance, and one or two friends of my own, dutiful citizens and brave fighters, who would never have chosen any sort of War. I always find myself thinking of Julian, who breathed free in War, as if it took a weight off him. I believe hundreds of thousands of people cry with gratitude, though not from fear, when they think of the little old army.

Not that I forget Billy, but he is more familiar to me, more like me and my friends. Julian I don't understand, but merely worship. He gives meaning to the words British Empire.

I don't think it's fair that you should hear so little as you probably do of all the times that Julian and Billy are thought of. So, as I was thinking of them, I thought I would let you know.

## TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Oct., 1917.*

I will bicycle if it's like this ; if not, I shall just trot, and come back behind the pony.

Now for tomorrow's lecture, which, speaking roughly, is about the Troubadours. A fat lot of good it will do all those young women to hear who the Troubadours were. You hand out the stuff, and then you find, a little later on, that it's all been cut out and made into a morning costume for a prig. Everyone is dressing herself, and Elliston and Cavell are all right. They spotted the thing at once, and set up the right kind of shop.

It's a great comfort and ease to talk to you. Ah, freedom is a noble thing !

TO R. W. CHAPMAN

(Serving with the British Salonica Force.)

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 Oct., 1917.*

It is awful for you to get no letters. I am a poor hand at them ; it's such a violent job for the imagination to jump right across and begin. All good letters, except where they are bare assurances of affection, are a kind of soliloquy, like a gentleman suffering from nightmare and intruding upon a busy office. He is much valued no doubt.

But I have been reading *Pride and Prejudice* in bed. (It's a comfort to have it done right, with a proper text.) So I thought I would tell you. Of course it's very swell. She knows a lot ; and I believe she knows what she doesn't know. At least, I shouldn't like to believe that she thought she knew anything about married people or young men. Her married people are merely a bore or a comfort to the young—nothing to each other. Her young men, my Gawd ! I will take only Darcy and Bingley. Of course they have no profession—they have money. But there is no scrap of evidence, no indication, that they can *do* anything, shoot a partridge, or add up figures, or swim or brush their hair. They never talk of anything except young women, a subject taboo among decent young men. (I find that women mostly don't know that men never talk intimately about them. Jane didn't know this.) Well, Darcy and Bingley have only one interest in life—getting married, and marrying their friends one to another.

It is incredible, immense, yet it deludes you while you read.

As for the young women, they are marvellous and incomparable, so that Jane is a swell all the same. But her young men would be black-balled in any Club. . . .

We wish we could see your wife oftener. She is looking well, and is equal, I think, to her job, which is as tough a one as there is at the front.

### TO MISS C. A. KER

*Ferry Hinksey, 7 Nov. 1917.*

I hasten to tell you what comes into my head. For one thing Philip has discarded the bicycle and now *rides* to Wytham Abbey before we get down to breakfast. There she has lessons from a young Frenchwoman called who really understands French and Italian poetry, and speaks both languages perfectly. Otherwise she is just the usual tactful, tricky, greedy, hysterical little frog-woman. One day I said to Philip, "By the bye, Philip, you can tell me, is she a liar?"

P. "Yes."

I. "Well, I think she is, too."

P. "I don't think she is; I know she is."

We then passed on to other topics.

Adrian is in the line again. He wrote with enthusiasm of a motley parcel he had from you. Then he said "Isn't it awful about the Italians? However, it doesn't really matter, as the war is being won on the Western front."

Tine was more naval in tone on the same affair, "I see," he says, "that the Italians as well as the Russians, are now packing up. In a short time we shall be alone in our glory."

He says he's very sorry for King George. It's lonely enough being skipper of a destroyer, and to be King is much worse.

Hilary's Margaret has been here for three weeks or so. Reports on her are favourable. Except that I sometimes wish I were smarter (a thing that in any case I would take no trouble to be) I have nothing to regret.

TO D. NICHOL SMITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 20 Jan., 1918.*

I have just been reading your Introduction to the little shilling Shaks. book <sup>1</sup>—it is jolly good. I am amused to find (by inference) that I belong, with you, to the 20th century, while old Bradley is decently buried in the 19th. Serves him right. I don't know how it is, he interests me all the time, and all the time he irritates me. I believe it's the religious strain in him. Come to think of it, he treats his text exactly as preachers treat the Bible. Twist it to get the juice out.

A pity you didn't put him and Dowden and Swinburne in. I suppose you couldn't get leave.

May I come to tea next Wednesday? I bring my own sugar (and biscuits and tea, if necessary). We ought to meet now term is on, or what's an English School?

I am printing a new War lecture which contains (incidentally) a demonstration that British Freedom is best represented by the freedom of English syntax. I think this is a "valooable truth", as old Wordsworth used to say of his own remarks. No "Institution" can possibly stand for what we mean by freedom.

Perhaps you will tell me when we meet how the devil I am to lecture on Shakespeare. I feel like Balaam.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,  
25 Feb. 1918.*

DEAR OLD MAN,

Enter the Spider once more, just to cheer you. Don't you go and worry about German savantry. All our second-rate people have for long been attracted and influenced by it. Many of them to-day hold higher posts than they could

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare Criticism* (World's Classics).



possibly have reached if they had not got on the back of a Method—and swaggered on it. This applies to — who has large second-rate tracts in a mind that is not second-rate.

There have been a few first-rate Germans. We shall not lose the good of them. But German University culture is mere evil. It is a touchstone for the second-rate. The first-rate look at it and are not deflected.

The aniline dyes history is the type of the whole business.

A Scot, a friend of W. P. Ker, said “ I’ll tell ye what I’m gaun to do the day the War ends. I’m gaun out into the street to find that tow-heided lassie frae the stationer’s, and I’m gaun to say to her ‘ Tell them never to send me anither copy of *Land and Water*. ”

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 6 March, 1918.*

MY DEAR MRS. FUFF,

That is how I like to think of you, as you were christened by two soldiers. I can’t accept gold for copper, your splendid letter for a printed tract, so I write though I have only a minute.

This war won’t be won by calculation, only by faith, so I am badly situated among the sceptics and calculators. They don’t question the ends desired, but enjoy being superior and pointing out difficulties and impossibilities. I met one in the street yesterday, an Oxford Fellow of a College. He said there is just a chance of the Americans changing the situation, but, if they don’t, we can’t go on after this year. He was quite unaware of the abysmal meanness of his words. We can go on till we’re all dead. Of course, he is in a Public Office, where there is no fire and no light and no Christ receive your soul.

I left him alone. There is a thing theologians call in-

vincible ignorance, and you are judged in Heaven for loss of time and effort if you try to save it.

The grass is cut while it is green. It is only human beings that we want to see yellow. When I want to die, as I sometimes do, it is chiefly, I think, to get out of bad company and be clean again, as clean as the wind or as nothing.

Well, never mind, we are going to lunch with soldiers.

TO JOHN SAMPSON

*The Hangings, Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,*  
8 March, 1918.

DEAR SIR,

Having omitted to say since it seems to you proper and a thing to be done to compare my hand of write to an insect, and the spider being chosen for that purpose, and raising no objection to same, being a modest man and not inclined to interfere with gentlemen giving a free vent to their opinions such as they are, I now hasten to add though strongly disinclined to introduce vermin with a view to acknowledging your last kind letter, and feeling highly honoured thereby, nevertheless your learned and careful penmanship does call to my mind now that insects are the subject of debate not the spider far from it but the sacred beetle which to the Egyptians in their darkness was an object of reverence not to mention at this present crisis the heads of Huns on the march all square and fat with a view to efficiency and similarity so trusting that the innocent freedom of thought as between old friends may cause no awkwardness and wishing you the favours of fortune.

I remain,

Your correspondent,

WALTER RALEIGH.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 April, 1918.*

Lucie has had a letter from Hiwy. Adrian was hit in the left side on March 25 and was last seen being taken back on a stretcher. That is all his Major knows. His Colonel told Hiwy that he had done extraordinarily well (you see he had five days of the fighting) and was recommended for the Military Cross.

I suppose the hospitals, like the posts, were a good deal disorganised, and no-one knows where he was taken or whether he got there. His battalion had lost 18 officers and 400 men when the Major spoke to Hiwy.

So it's not hopeless, though it's nervous work for Lucie hearing no more.

Tine has sent us the best letter of his life, describing the achievements of J. L. Myres as a brigand. A real brigand, nothing bogus or theatrical about it.

TO J. S. PHILLIMORE

*Ferry Hinksey, 11 April, 1918.*

I have written a Deliverance. Of course (as I have hinted in the Deliverance) a point like this would be settled, South of Birmingham, by mutual courtesy and concession, because, after all, it's not necessary to salvation. But then Scotland has John Knox and Kirk Sessions and Wee Frees and above all the Blood Feud. And once the Blood Feud starts, all Scots are small-minded ; they forget the sun and moon and stars ; this one thing they do ; the whole virtue of the Universe is in a button,—but not a button on a foil ; any old stick will serve to beat a dog ; and no-one grudges time, or for that matter Eternity, if only a sense of acute discomfort can be generated in an alleged hell-bird. So it was

with no sense of pride in my mission as a Peacemaker that I said "But is Not Wrong".<sup>1</sup>

TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 17 April, 1918.*

There is nothing more to tell, so this is only to say what a comfort your letters are. About three or four special people (of whom you are one) had a rather personal liking for Adrian. Well, mothers are mothers, and sons are sons, and we all have to go through the hoop, but it's these three or four that are the great comfort.

Lucie is all right. I think contempt for slush would save her if nothing else did. She was *awfully* angry with Mr. Devlin for making a heroic point of his willingness to fight (at his own time). And it's true that the Oxford cabmen are quiet swells in comparison with him. They have almost all lost sons.

I lectured to Cadets last night—about 150 in Hertford hall. An officer I met said to me (he knows Germany) that the reason the Germans make the war is the reason we shall win. They could not bear our superiority. And the private British soldier has not even begun to be *impressed* by the German soldier, whereas the Germans think of us all the time.

I think the reason we shall win is that we are quite willing to lose, if need be, and they are not. They will be an ugly sight about 1920. Pitiful.

Americans, and wounded, are splendid tonics. I had two American delegates here yesterday. They were much

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the great *But* controversy. But me no buts! An editor of the *Chemical Journal* returned a contributor's article and demanded that it be rewritten because the writer had begun sentences with the word BUT: which the editor (his name, I think, was Cain) asserted was not correct English. W. A. R. was appealed to as independent arbitrator.—J. S. P.

relieved and pleased to find that no-one resented their entry after three years ! They expected to be jeered at.

They wanted a League of Nations, and I told them (what is true) that if the English-speaking nations agree, it's feasible ; otherwise impossible.

Lucie will try to *see* Mrs. —. Mostly, we must wait. It's a lucky thing so many of our doctors have been mopped up. They will stand up to the Hun, tactfully and firmly.

Tine has been blown up, and is trying to get home in the clothes he has on.

TO J. THEODORE DODD, Esq., J.P.

*Oxford, April 24, 1918*

DEAR SIR,—I was sorry to get your circular.<sup>1</sup>

I have been fourteen years in Oxford, and have seen a great deal of the undergraduates in the Colleges.

Drunkenness is rare, and is well dealt with by a decent public opinion among the men themselves. There is less excess (I speak, of course, of the years before the War) than there was at Cambridge when I was an undergraduate ; and that was very far from being habitual or general or scandalous.

I cannot think it wise to ask the resident members of the University to adopt rules drafted for them by a body of petitioners the bulk of whom are neither responsible for the discipline of the Colleges nor well acquainted with the life of the undergraduates.

A certain amount of freedom to go wrong is essential in a

<sup>1</sup> A Memorial for signature had been sent to him as to other Oxford residents, addressed to the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors and Governing Bodies of the Colleges, petitioning that as the Colleges were nearly empty owing to the War, and College life interrupted, it was a good opportunity to make stringent rules restricting the consumption of alcohol by undergraduates.

University, where men are learning, not to obey, but to choose.

Thousands of the men whose habits you censure have already died for their people and country. Virtually all have fought. Why is it, that when the greatest mystery of the Christian religion comes alive again before our eyes, so many of the authorized teachers of Christianity do not see it or understand it, but retire to the timid security of a prohibitive and negative virtue? Your petition is an insult to the men who have saved you and are saving you.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

WALTER RALEIGH.

#### TO LYTTON STRACHEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 May, 1918.*

Your book <sup>1</sup> is a delight. I was looking forward to it. It's not often that a gift-book is a pure joy. Mostly they are books that one would not dream of buying.

I have read only Flo and Tom. (It is you who have made me so familiar.) Pass a person through your mind, with all the documents, and see what comes out. That seems to be the method. Also, choose them, in the first place, because you dislike them.

Well, it gives a queer and strange result. Tom comes out an appalling pretentious snob. Flo is transfigured. It's no use your jeering at those who romanticised the lady with the lamp. You are a more incorrigible sinner. You're like Kipling, who sees God in a machine. I find myself wondering whether all those stout military males who got caught in the machine were really such sinners. I notice you are not hard on Dr. Arnold's bad boys. So there's some kind of creed at the back.

Of course there is; that's the fascination. No one can

<sup>1</sup> *Eminent Victorians.*

condemn except on the basis of a creed. Your creed comes easy to me. But I don't quite follow its dealings with Flo. "By God," I keep on thinking excitedly, "Flo has got off." A judge of feminist leanings, is it?

It's queer. Of course the cruelty of a really hard-bitten good woman is asserted, in the Flo sketch, and proved. But it is justified; and it is not deeply felt. The death of S. Herbert and Clough is most enjoyable. They die because Juggernaut is great; not because they are silly.

I can't tell you how I like the book,—every word. I do wish I could see you.

#### TO LYTTON STRACHEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 May, 1918.*

I have now read Gordon. It is most exciting. That strain is of a higher mood.

I never before heard the whole thing put so fully. Do you know, on your evidence, I think Gordon was probably absolutely right in asking for Zobehr? He was thinking of the world of Khartoum, and was judged by the world of the party press.

You are hard on Cromer, and not quite convincing. He did not "keep up his classics"—he was a poor boy, and had a poor education. He was self-made. He learned Greek late in life, because, being able to speak Modern Greek, he wondered what it used to be like earlier. I get the impression, from you, of a reserved public-school man. It isn't right. He was never at a public school. About his impossible job you are splendid.

I wish I could meet some one who understands Gordon from the sympathetic side. "Mad" doesn't quite fill the bill. "Nearly, but not quite,"—to borrow from your Gladstone. Gordon was no ass. There must be some arrangement of the pieces that makes a pattern of the puzzle. But he didn't work by a consistent logic of words, so perhaps

he can't be put into words. Some woman ought to do it —*not* a woman who stands for the woman's cause, but a woman who knows woman's inspired tricks. There's conjuring required.

You see how you fascinate me. A million thanks !

I don't think you ever disliked Gordon. So now I am going to see how you stand to Manning.

What I mean, of course, is that I can't understand Gordon's Biblical fads, and I gather that you can't. He took the Communion, didn't he, in many London churches on one day before he started,—as a magic protection, the more the better ?

#### TO LYTTON STRACHEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 10 May, 1918.*

Let no one say I am ungrateful for your book—here is the third instalment of my thanks. I have passed it on to Lucie, and I miss it dreadfully. She says quite truly that it is delightfully real.

Manning I cannot criticise. I think I am colour-blind to this sort of life. If you say Religion I can't think of fame and money, and if you say Money I can't think of Religion. But all the piquancy of this sort of work comes from squinting.

I am bothered by an idea that Newman was fairly happy and that Manning was not. His face in the Merton common-room portrait is that of a fox, all alert, looking out of his earth and listening to the music of the hounds.

The bibs and tuckers and aprons are too much for me. Mere prejudice and habit, you may call it. But they are too much. And priests are like women ; almost all men have considerable tracts of their lives where things don't much matter. Women and priests have hardly any neutral ground, full of yawnings and games and indifference.

By the bye, none of your sitters is capable of this indifference. It's a pleasure to meet the Marquis of Hartington.



I have always thought of Tom as you paint him, but I have always thought I must be wrong. Life is very exacting, and I really do not see how that kind of self-possessed public ass could live 47 years—was it? I expect we see nothing but the shell, but the hermit crab has soft fleshy comforts inside.

I think your *Lives* very swell, if I had to choose I should say Gordon is the swellest, and Manning the cleverest, and Tom the wickedest. As for Flo, I want another supplementary life. It's all true, but I can't believe it. What did she *think about*, when she was resting? That was part of her life.

#### TO LYTTON STRACHEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 May, 1918.*

One more letter, now that I have your address. We want your method for some stately Victorians who have waited long for it.

First the great Panjandrum—Victoria Herself. This is obvious. How can an adjective have a meaning that is not dependent on the meaning of its substantive?

Next—Jowett! I am keenest about this. Remember no Don has ever been properly done, full-length. It is difficult, but worth the pains. You would have to examine his writings. Have you ever compared (as I have had to) his translation of Plato's symposium with Shelley's translation? It is amazing that his should have got the reputation.

The difficulty is that many of the best things about him are by way of oral tradition.

Then, Tennyson. (I believe, in the main, he would be let off.)

I also want Dizzy. It's really wicked of you to leave those stout volumes alone, when you could put the gist of them within reach of us.

I do hope you will think of Jowett.

## TO HIS SON ADRIAN

*Ferry Hinksey,  
2 June, 1918.*

We were so rejoiced to hear you were all right. You see, on March 25, we read an account in *The Times* of how the Leicesters defended Mory, and were relieved "after heavy losses." Then we heard no more for weeks. Hiwy made all enquiries he could, he saw your Colonel, had a letter from your Major, and talked with a sergeant major who said you had been wounded at Ervillers and he himself had put you on a stretcher and started you back. But a certain Captain Bolus, wounded in London, whom Aunt Jessie saw, said he didn't believe this; he was wounded on the 25th and limped back three miles, and when he left he said you were all right and about the most cheerful of the bunch.

Your Colonel said you had done "extraordinarily well," and your Company Commander, Captain Silver (sick, at Bournemouth) wrote us a long letter saying he had counted on you more than on anyone else.

Your letter dated April 9, Rastatt, has just arrived. Regular parcels have been arranged, to start at once, through the Red Cross. I will get some cigarettes to-morrow, and the books, sent from shops. You will have had a dreary long time to wait.

Tine is home just now, for three weeks at least, waiting for a new Command. He is tired, but quite cheerful.

All the interesting things that come into my head to say would be stopped either by the Censor this side or by the Censor that side. So I fall back on local news. Philip has a goat, which she milks, and a kid. She is also bringing up by hand a small sparrow that fell out of a nest.

I forgot to say the first news we got of you was a Red Cross telegram—"prisoner unwounded," then a War Office letter to the same effect. Captain Bolus said he believed the Sergeant must have mistaken one Lieut. Baker, who was wounded, for you.

I fear the War will still be very long. I see no sign of a finish on either side. Tell me what books you want. I am glad you are well treated, and I must say that most of the officers I have seen who have been prisoners in Germany have said they had nothing to complain of except the dullness and boredom of being prisoners.

Much love. Your parcels, with food, etc., ought to reach you every five days and to be full of nice things. The first ought to have started about four days ago. I don't know how long they take. The Red Cross at Thurloe Place, S. Kensington, manage it. They are very businesslike and efficient. Nothing has gone to Rastatt, for the Red Cross got the Mainz address just before your card came.

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 8 June, 1918.*

I enjoyed myself very much at your kind club, though I daresay I was rather too excitable owing to being partially drunk. I hate quarrelling about Thackeray, and I mostly always avoid it. I can't bear him, but it's silly and useless to say so. His bogus Queen Anne talk. His *patronage* of Swift. His habit of noticing things that only a valet, or E. F. Benson, would notice, such as that the greengrocer is waiting, in cotton gloves. He's a dreadful man, superior to the last gasp, and incurably sentimental in what I call a timid way. Also damd moral. He's no use at all to me. But of course those who really like him are right, as all those who really like anything are right, and I never interfere or decry. But being drunk, you see, I thought how all that strain of thought did what it could to make my youth miserable, and failed only because the flow of blood was just enough to burst that old blighter's boracic morality-dressings.

I will now write out my son Valentine's Ode to the Moon. It was written or composed on the bridge of the *Arno* (now

with God) at midnight, in the Mediterranean. The naval phrase "our long-haired chums" is worth more than "Thackeray on Women."

Badly bleached crumpet, pock-marked gibbous orb,  
Small wonder lunatics are named from thee !  
A tinsel ball pulled from a Christmas tree  
Gets thee for beauty, has something on thee for utility.

Mag-ridden cheeseling, guide of submarines,  
That turn thy sickly light to sicklier ends,  
If thou and I are ever to be friends,  
Moon, thou must put in overtime to make amends.

Hide thy nefarious glimmer in a cloud  
Until the Kaiser and his horde are slain ;  
Then, on the evenings when it doesn't rain,  
Meeting our long-haired chums, we'll bless thy light again.

This is the only copy except the first, which the author wrote at my request.

What was the name of the pleasant young Cambridge man ?

I hope to get a job, a long one, in London.

### TO MRS. A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 June, 1918.*

When I heard that your sister was bombed, and how she had worked for three years, I thought (and said) that she has richly earned it and deserves it. She stands with the soldiers and pays the high price. These nurses can't be put off with a cheaper billet. I felt the same about Nurse Cavell and the silly talk about her murder. She had done wonders in helping Belgians and British to get back to their armies, and she was justly, or legally, executed, a patriot and martyr.

If we go to heaven on the gratitude and affection that we have inspired, there can be no doubt that the cloud that

lifts your sister is enough for a hundred people. It's really rather stately. But you can't see it, for most of her patients remember and don't talk, and many are dead, and all are scattered. And I hope she won't go to heaven just yet. It's a comfort to hear that her mind is all right.

Spenser Farquharson said quite quietly at lunch yesterday (to me) that there's very little chance that Hilary will live through the war. He has lost his own best brothers and, quite rightly, does not care much about other losses. These people who have paid, and have stuck it, have an incomparable grimness. Nobody's luck holds for more than a few years, is what he said. He almost enjoys the thought, and I can't grudge it him, for it's that sort of thought that is the bar to a German victory. We are invincible, though not indestructible.

Tine' went back on Thursday to an Atlantic destroyer, the *Manners*. He says it's waste to use him in the Atlantic, when he knows the Mediterranean so well. But the Americans must be convoyed.

I spend every morning in taking birds out from beneath my floor. The double wall is a perfect bird-trap.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 June, 1918.*

This is a secret, because to talk about it might prevent its happening, but I have just a *chance* of being chosen to write the history of this war in the air. I can't help being exalted about it—I should get over the lines in France (in a safe bus, no doubt) almost at once. Good men are running me for it, but of course it's coveted, and lots of others are trying for it. The funny thing is I *know* I could do it.

We had a most enthusiastic letter from Adrian's Colonel—a regular, and Guardsman. Adrian certainly had a splendid five days.

I wanted to come and tell you this, and when my lecturing is over, which is next week, I will. I have been much saner since I heard of my chance. I try to look at it coolly, but on the whole I think the chance good.

TO LT.-COLONEL E. Y. DANIEL

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 June, 1918.*

The more I think of the Air, the better I like it. I am a man of letters—driven there, I suppose, because I had that kind of education—but now I have got a profession I like better. When the war began, one of my three sons was in the Navy, and one in the Army. The third was at school, but went through Sandhurst and is now a prisoner in Germany. He fought very well.

Before I go to France, I shall need some advice about kit, and where to get it. I can't fly in my clerk's clothes. If I fly over the lines (which I should wish to do, if it can be done with reasonable prudence) I don't want to fall into German hands in clerk's clothes. A dressing gown would not matter for falling into British hands, but then we are humorous, and not militarists, merely fighters.

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 July, 1918.*

Your letter was dam pleasant to get. I was off my guard at Mill Hill; being pressed for time I gave them part of an address<sup>1</sup> that I gave a few months ago, with full acceptance, to the senior boys and some masters at Eton. The reporters and scribes did the rest, at Mill Hill. So now, damn it, I must publish the thing in full. And so I will. It will involve the Press much deeper, but I don't care what they say about it if only they will quote correctly.

<sup>1</sup> *The War and the Press.*

I have never before had shoals of abusive letters by every post. Two of the most abusive, one from a working man and one from a business man, I have answered painfully. Not without pleasure, to see what they will do next. I did not mention them. They mentioned me a good deal. But I thought them both honest. The working man, after saying that no doubt I lived wholly with Conchies, and in an air raid would trample down women and children to save my filthy carcase, suddenly said, "I cannot, in these few lines, call you a man." I rather liked him for that. And now I wonder what he will do about my letter. St. Paul's mildest is an angry tirade compared with it. Yet it is quite firm.

It seems I have taken on the daily press single-handed. So I shall now put down all that I mean, and shall leave it at that. To tease them is rather like teasing women about their clothes.

#### TO LYTTON STRACHEY

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 July, 1918.*

Nothing can make your book undelightful. But it is a counterblast, there is no denying that ; if you go for Samuel Smiles, he has friends who go for you. I am always quite content if what I mean is in print, between covers. If it then dies or decays, at least Samuel Smiles can't hurt it or kill it. He can't hurt you.

I think you should put this book behind you, and do some more.

As you know, I think your Cromer is wrong. But I like it, all the same. It is true that the well-bred educated public official simply couldn't understand Gordon. You wanted someone in that essential part, and Cromer, who happened to be there, had to take it. I was interested, the other day, to hear that Cromer (or Baring) backed Gordon's request for Zobeir Pasha, strongly. It was upset by a majority of one at a scratch cabinet meeting. Glad-

stone, who was away, was for it. Such is life. These facts are from Sanderson.

More power to your elbow! And don't worry, the noise is produced by the din you have made.

TO H. H. ASQUITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 July, 1918.*

It was a great pleasure to me to get your letter, though I fear nothing can come of it. I have just accepted a job the idea of which pleases me hugely—to write the history of the War in the Air. So in August I am to fly in France, and later (not so attractive) I am to have a London office. I shall still give lectures here in winter.

A second obstacle ought perhaps to have come first. I don't think Parliament is my line, and, oddly enough, I don't know which is my party. My friends, many of them tell me I am a Liberal; and so far as the Whig party embodies the national tradition, I suppose I am a Whig. But it doesn't matter, for I should be a fish out of water in Parliament, on either side.

I value your invitation enormously, but I believe that the invitation (to a seat in Parliament) is better than the thing.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 July, 1918.*

It never rains but it pours. Besides the Recordership of the Air I have been offered a Seat in Parlt. I did not refuse it, because I could not get so far; I failed to bring my mind to bear on it. Lucie says that the smell of the place was too much, when she was once there.

We have been in London at Buckingham Palace, and I have a delicious crooked airman, who I hope is coming here, and who says, "Don't listen to them when they talk about



your heart, and air-sickness, and all that nonsense ; it's perfectly simple ; I'll just take you up 9,000 feet and show you the lines." He is adorable.

Goodbye. I hear you are all entangled in the snares of Bloodyvich. You can't resist one of these little ones, and they often prove to be not at all little—they unwind, and tip you up, and are everywhere, like God, as Hiwy observed cheerfully of a reel of cotton when he was four years old.

TO R. W. CHAPMAN

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 July, 1918.*

Your Johnson notes are splendid. I will leave them at the Press, for I am off to France. I daresay you have heard I am now Historian of the War in the Air, and have to learn my trade.

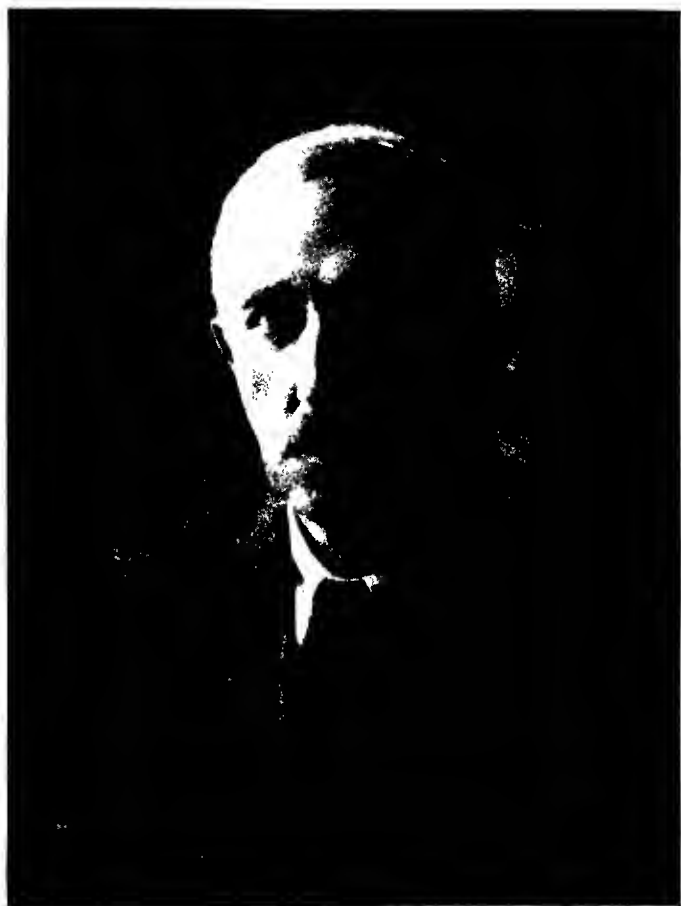
You are lucky to find Johnson out before you are old, or, indeed, at all. God help me, I had to lecture on him before I knew him, and poked fun at him all the time, at second hand. You can see the sort of thing in books by Vaughan, a deeply spiritual Balliol Romantic, who wrote a book on English criticism—only he is stupider than ever I was.

I can't remember how I escaped. I think I came across remarks like that on Tom Thumb, and realised that it didn't fit. So having ladled out modified Macaulay for years, I suddenly began to lecture on Johnson—at Cambridge it was. Now I think I like him best. Nothing is too good to say about him. The things he hasn't got don't matter.

It would be jolly to have proper texts.

I saw your article in the *Lt. Supp. on Old Books and New Editions*. I also met the editor and told him what I thought, but found, to my relief, that he needed no converting.

When my mother died, I felt it most about three years later. Every later success loses its point. Not that she would have cared twopence about the achievement that earned the success, but she would have loved to see her



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH FOR HIS PASSPORT TO BAGHDAD, 1922



son important. Your mother, at least, saw them safely launched.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 Aug., 1918.*

\* How could you do it so fast? <sup>1</sup> It is quite perfect, not a stop wrong. I have sent one each to Tine and Hiwy; they will be thankful. I can't think of twelve people who are sure to like poetry that's real, so I am keeping some for the present, and glad to have them.

I think Spring Rice brought America in. Of course America does not know this, and I daresay he did not know it either. But there he was, a troubled simple white man with an exquisite mind, and there was Bernstoff, a bloody gorilla, playing the polite, and America couldn't help seeing the difference.

Germany doesn't know why she's going to lose the war, but this poem is it. So I think it's a great historical document.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*19 Aug., 1918.*

Here I am, in France, and paralysed, for I can't say anything with dates and names. But I am living in a hut, very comfortable, and I have seen a battle, and I have dropped in on the Partridge, where his lot are putting up wire. It is cheerful here, and all right, and the Air men are beyond belief. They are no good to tell this to; they think you are pulling their legs. But the standard of life, and how to behave—they do say there was something like it at the time of the Crusades, but I don't believe it. (The picnic element continues strong, as in the Crusades.) It justifies all the people who are sticking it and working at home.

<sup>1</sup> She had typed an MS. copy of a Poem by Sir Cecil Spring Rice for him.

It's a shame that this life, which would suit all eager spirits, is denied to most of them. France is the place. Please take care of L. and P. And of yourself.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Hotel Ritz,  
Place Vendome,  
Paris, 31 Aug., 1918.*

I couldn't tell you where I was, but dropping in on the kindly nice censor I found him reading my letters. Of course it was all right, and one doesn't mind if one doesn't see it, but it paralysed my correspondence.

I am on my way to the Independent Force and Trenchard—a great man, if there are great men. I start at 7.0 to-morrow morning, so I have to get into a very comfortable couch. There is not butter in this hotel, but they do cook well. I don't like rich hotels; I am sent here for speed's sake. My travelling warrant calls me "*l'isole*," and that's how I feel. All the women in the dining room had black hats and powder and short skirts. They were almost all fat white *foie gras* women. The young 'uns among them had greedy eyes, with that curious expression of looking out only to find what you can hook in to raise prices at home. About *two* looked moderately generous and self-forgetful, and thereby became very remarkable. Why is this? You give when you give. Lucie gives when she gives. But it seems not to be the rule. I now understand why salmon-roe is so deadly a bait for salmon that it is forbidden by law, yet sometimes you catch nothing with it. Some of these ladies had no bites.

When I come back I will tell you of my flying and artillery work. My, but it's hard and squalid at the front. That's what makes an hotel like this so cruel, with sleepy luxurious Jew-boys in unstained uniforms, smiling tolerantly at *poseuse* women. Hiwy and his lot have their meals in a hut, in

shirt sleeves, up to their ears in dust, and the shells always within sight.

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 22 Sept., 1918.*

I had a good time with your book, which seems to me almost the best of the lot.<sup>1</sup> I like your way of telling stories which have the soul of stories in them and are jealously saved from all the artificial polish and clink of stories. And especially the London scenes. How much better London is now that people walk the streets to look about them, instead of looking for where Horace Walpole or any other God-for-saken blighter lived! What does it matter where Dr. Johnson lived? He has missed something, anyhow.

I went to France and lived with the Flying men. I see that Wells (H. G.) is attacking them. The poor fool doesn't know what a stress it puts on human nature to get the daily deeds of the flying men out of it. He does not admire the gallants who are gay and reckless because they won't be dutiful and driven. Why doesn't he write about someone, or even something, that he does admire? I think he is going sour. He talks as if we ought to have asked his leave before we went to war.

I flew all I could, and am going to fly all I can while this machine is to me. It is perhaps dishonest, for I'm supposed to make a book of it, and I can't feel much interest in the book. But I'm going to Egypt and Palestine and the Ægean and Salonika quite soon, so as to find them still flying.

You sit in a canoe, high up, a fixed point in the air, while the doll's house of the earth, very slowly indeed, crawls past under you. Meantime a furious gale blows, on the stillest day, so that if you stretch out your arm it's pushed back by the wind. Getting off is amazing first, and the best moment, and the most dangerous, they say.

<sup>1</sup> *Twixt Eagle and Dove.*

To J. M. BARRIE

*Ferry Hinksey, 22 Sept., 1918.*

I was almost ashamed to get a letter from you in exchange for a mere pamphlet. It is the last of my professional works for the present; I have been in France for a month with the flying men, and am to go to the East soon; all with a view to writing the history of the War in the Air. It is as difficult to write as it would be to write a history of the war in the blood, and I don't know if I can do it. But I like the experience part.

I am pretty often in London on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, so I must try to see you. I hope the adorable Cynthia, who is very good *and* very clever, is with you.

I read a piece of yours that I liked about Wm. Holly. It seemed to me a just view. I am always offended by the many writers who glorify the Kaiser with stilted abuse. I love what Albert Ball wrote to his father, who called the Huns devils—"but I do not think him a devil, and indeed I do not think anything wrong about the Hun. He is just a good chap with very little guts, trying to do his best."

To MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 1 Oct., 1918.*

You will have noticed that Bulgaria is down and out. Turkey and Austria, it is believed, will follow, which will leave only one of the great confederation still active against us—a little northern nation, the name of which, owing to press of business, at present eludes my memory. The place the governesses used to come from—you will remember.

Fun is the great antidote to poison of the emotions. And the beauty of it is it works perfectly well with both friend and enemy. If there is no fun in your love and no fun in your hate, then there is not really much difference between them.

President Wilson might be asked to put this into his next note to Germany. He would be glad of help.

I'm glad you're better—you do *sound* better.

Marry your children, sack your servants, forget your enemies, remember your friends, enslave your admirers, fatten yourself—and all will yet be well.

### TO JOHN DE M. JOHNSON

*Oxford, 15 Oct., 1918.*

I send you the proofs.<sup>1</sup> They missed their spring, or you would have got them this afternoon.

I wish I could add an epilogue on the League of Nations. But I can't hold you up for so long; things are changing so fast. Valentine writes, "I find that most of the members of the fighting services have been under the impression that they were fighting for their Country, not for a theory of Lord Grey's." And it does not commend the League of Nations that almost everyone makes fear of another war the great argument, which works all right until a *real* cause of war turns up again—as it will. Then who's afraid?

### TO LADY DESBOROUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 16th Oct., 1918.*

You won't remember a prediction of mine, but it has come true. Every evening Philippa, in pyjamas and a dressing gown, digs out your book from its shelf and broods on it. Then she puts it back without a word. It is in my room. I certainly never so much as mentioned it to her. But she reads it eternally.

That is not fame; it is a much sweller thing, life and living influence. The book goes on making English men and women.

<sup>1</sup> *England and the War*. His War Addresses collected.



They are going to get what they died for. They always knew they would, so there's no one to be sorry for except ourselves, and, as *you* know, we mustn't.

The papers make a great deliverance and a solemn joy into a vulgar noisy thing. Or they seem to, but they can't. The Germans are learning a good deal from us, and I think we have learnt something from them. They were not wholly wrong when (in their abominable bullying voice) they kept on saying that War is a greater and better thing than peace. Now they begin to doubt it just when we begin to know it.

I think this is a truer view than the accepted orthodoxy, that they made a squalid horror, and we cleaned it up. I certainly can't imagine Victorian England gradually developing, by way of peace and industry, into something finer and greater. But I can imagine the new England doing almost anything.

#### TO MRS. ANNING BELL

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Oct., 1918.*

I sent on your letter—I hope — will sit. The letter was not too vulgar, only just vulgar enough, about as vulgar as we all ought to be. I think it will please him.

I wanted to say I would visit you next Thursday, but I have to get back here.

On Saturday night last I was sitting here with Lucie and Philip (in a dressing gown and pyjamas.) Philip was reading in the *Evening News*. She suddenly said "Here's a thing that we'll do to Fovvy" (that's me) "when we're fed up." She showed a paragraph headed "Man's Tea poisoned by his Daughter." "The daughter was 16," said Philip, "and I shall be 16 next year." I gave her 2/- at once, to get off. But it appears that 2/- a week is the price. That's the sort of thing. So I keep on talking about the gallows, and paying money.

## TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 28 Oct., 1918.*

Your Tanks has been a great delight. I have read it all aloud. (No danger!) It is the reallest thing I have seen on the War. If only I could get the like on Air operations!

Unmitigated heroism, which is the usual journalistic line, cloyes. Against a background of stupidity a thing done stands out in a real atmosphere.

You are an artist born, and born out of due time, for you belong to the Renaissance. You are enormously appreciative, ubiquitously intelligent, and never warm, for warmth makes the brain jerk and stick.

I don't see why this shouldn't be printed in a few copies. There is not a shadow of grievance or hostility in it. It is the sort of thing that would do endless good if it were published without your consent.

I will bring it to London and leave it with your beautiful maid.

If you go to Grillion's to-morrow I think you will see me. I am off to the East next week to collect more impressions. I can't do it like you?—I wish I could. Things get converted into judgments and verdicts in my mind long before I have had time to outline them truly for others. I am not patient enough for history.

## TO JOHN DE M. JOHNSON

*Oxford, 18 Nov., 1918.*

My book, though I say it, is a daisy. Hardly any of it is wrong. I was surprised to find how well it wears against the facts.

M. le Professeur Émile Legouis of 128 Avenue Émile Zola, Paris 15, wants a copy. I believe I mustn't send one. Will you? Unless, by chance, I put him on my list? I will step in and pay for it this afternoon.

I want it to reach Germany. But I daresay they will be greedy for the English view. For self-respect and sense of honour the whole nation is one large cow-turd.

TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 19 Nov., 1918.*

Saturday I could come with Philip if she will bring me—she is very severe. Friday I lecture, and have a class in the afternoon. The little book <sup>1</sup> you got will some day be a famous book. I told Lucie this; I never said it, or thought it, of any other of my books. It's not better than the others, only more famous. Meantime, no one takes any notice of it.

I have been all day with air officers. I hate watching and not doing the things.

Put Peggy on to sup us.

There's peace, so they say—why can't we have leisure and joy?

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 Nov., 1918.*

I am sorry you have been ill, or cheap; I am as cheap as a flea myself. It's the cold damp. If this war had not ended, I should have been in Egypt now. Mere heaven, in November.

I'm glad you like the book. I insisted on the collection, now I have stopped. But when I saw the proofs I recognised that it lacks a last paper on the Peace, or the League of Nations; which will fail, except locally and partially, because those who talk of it think that there's some thoughtful dodge whereby you can agree with people without liking them.

I think (though it cannot matter to me) that this little book

<sup>1</sup> The Collected War Essays called *England and the War*.

is more likely to be taken notice of hereafter than any of my so-called criticism. And the best paper would have been one showing how simple a thing it is to agree with people if you like them and how complicated and impossible it is if you don't. Writers on politics are like family solicitors; they are not called in until things are in a hopeless mess.

I want very badly to see M. Baring. He has a lot of things I want. A poor friend of mine, a kind of Radical, was asking me about Trenchard, and said "Is it true that he's off his head?" I said, "Not that I know of, not particularly." He said, "I heard some dreadful things about him." I said, "I daresay I can tell you whether they're true." "Well," said he, "I heard that he addressed one of his squadrons, and told them that they hadn't half enough casualties." "Good God," said I, "of course he did; that's absolutely all right." Maurice will understand this. It was amusing to see how my poor friend's piece of gossip, which he took to be a first-rate scandal, was punctured, and collapsed.

Well, never mind. When I was there Trenchard addressed a squadron, and said, "Some of you won't come back. Now I want to tell you what to do if you are driven down in Germany." He was making courage, every word. The squadron held themselves higher when he had done.

### TO CYNTHIA ASQUITH

*Ferry Hinksey, 6 Dec., 1918.*

Your delicious letter came this morning. I missed my spring in London, and didn't worry backwards.

I *must* see my old friend Sir James Barrie (who, oddly enough, is younger than you, in this respect only.) Shall I call on him at tea-time on Wednesday? I will, and will take my chance.

Adrian is home, rather thin and hollow, but well. He had a bad time the first two months at Rastatt, and then

much better at Mainz. He loathes the Hun, but does not accuse him mainly of cruelty. Rather of meanness and pin-pricks.

I never hardly mention these boys, because it's hardly possible, with three alive. But do you know, the others, who are not here, are growing, not fading? Now that peace is here all the middle aged (or hysterical half-witted young atrocities) are beginning to shout their horrid politics again. (They kept quite still while the war lasted.) And already those wonderful four years have become a table-land, sun-bathed, with a heroic society. It would be nice if they could come down on this side, but one wouldn't dare to ask them.

I think I must send you my book, in my public voice, which I can't help. The Flying History is not difficult, it's impossible. But I suppose I can do something, and then think of something else. I had all the Flies I could get.

Philip keeps goats, and is very old and wise. I have often thought about your mother, but you see she's on that table-land (very tiring it is) and I can't make my voice carry.

#### TO AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

*Ferry Hinksey, 10th December, 1918.*

A letter like yours is a rare and great pleasure. I collected these speeches <sup>1</sup> because I thought they may have an interest hereafter as the common English point of view on the War. When I read them all over I was amused by the arrogance of the point of view. But there it is; we are not arguing with foreigners, we're telling them. And we are a remarkable island—not a bit like Sumatra.

My youngest son is just back from prison in Germany. His battalion was shattered and the remnants taken in the March push. He was fairly well treated at Mainz. When the armistice came, all the guards went home. The officer

<sup>1</sup> *England and the War.*

prisoners went down to the Rhine and chartered a cargo steamer, which in six days took them to Holland. They stayed two nights in hotels in Cologne and, in the streets, watched the depressed returning German army. They went to the theatre in Dusseldorf—front boxes. All this of course in uniform. In the course of telling us my son (a kid of 20) remarked that there is not a town in England where German officers would be allowed to behave as he and his mates behaved in Cologne. I said, "How do you mean?" He said, "O, walked about as if the place belonged to us, and called for everything we wanted."

Do you know a poem to Bernard Shaw by Hugh Sidgwick, killed in the War? I must send you three verses of it with this—it's not high-stepping diction, but just straight talk.

My wife once said that she likes me to be at home, in my own study. She doesn't want to talk to me, or to see me, but she likes to think I'm there. That's exactly how I feel about the small number of my oldest friends.

#### TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 14 Dec., 1918.*

Xmas. Come to tea, or ask me. But I spose you're too busy. If you would tell me what day you're shopping I would ask you to tea in one of these Oxford tea-dens.

I am writing a poem<sup>1</sup> about my death. A very comfortable poem—not sentimental.

What a nuisance it will be,  
—All that then remains of me!  
Shelves of books I never read,  
Piles of bills undocketed,  
Shaving-brushes, razors, strops,  
Bottles that have lost their tops,

<sup>1</sup> The Poem was completed and printed in *Laughter from a Cloud*.

Boxes full of odds and ends,  
Letters from departed friends,  
Mouldy ties and broken braces,  
Tucked away in secret places,  
Baggy trousers, ragged coats,  
Stacks of ancient lecture-notes,  
And that ghostliest of shows—  
Boots and shoes in horrid rows.  
Cheerful though they are and kind,  
My lovers, whom I leave behind,  
When they find these in my stead.  
Will be sorry I am dead.

You see how easy it is. I could carry on for pages. There is to be a tribute to Lucie, who never in her life has waked anyone from sleep. Now do come, or send, or call, or hide and squeak.

TO JOHN DE M. JOHNSON (Clarendon Press)

Oxford, 15 Dec., 1918.

*England and the War.*

p. 18, l. 15. For "He," read "he."

(Can some expert in your office write the history of this practise of spelling "he" with a capital when it refers to God? I do not find it in the 16th and 17th centuries—the age of capitals. My impression is that it is a fruit of 19th century High Church Romanticism, and was introduced by men who were capable of pronouncing even a pronoun with unction. The use of the capital, like the unctuous pronunciation, causes a quite perceptible little hitch in the flow of the thought. But they don't care twopence about the thought so long as they can put on their little caps and do their little bobs.)

Lastly, when shall I come in? I will try to-morrow about 3.0.

TO R. W. CHAPMAN

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 Jan., 1919.*

It is wonderful.<sup>1</sup> I have drowned myself in it once again. The amazing straightness of the old boy when he talks privately to one person, as in the letter to Dr. Lawrence on the death of his wife ! You have done it much better than I could ; I now see that my plan (first-hand stuff only, beginning with the first meeting) would have been poor. It would have been things seen at the expense of things heard. And hearing matters most.

It's not unfair to down Macaulay every time. He played to make every cheap dog feel himself superior to Johnson, and succeeded with the cheapest dogs. I'm so glad you have put in some of the solid things.

TO MISS SPEARING

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 Jan., 1919.*

Your letter was safe ; it had been put on a pile of large envelopes, of which too many, containing matter of no interest, come to my house. It was a shame ; you were with the fag magazines and pamphlets !

I have read your letter and scheme, and have looked at the reprints of your papers—which I shall read to-morrow in the train. I think the scheme excellent ; if it put the matter of fact clearly, it would be a great help. It occurs to me that both Mr. Gosse and Dr. Jessop write too much about Donne and do too little on the facts. (Professor Grierson's Essay is an early work, evidently written before the work for the edition.)

All the same, Donne is difficult. None of these three seems to me to get there. (Gosse is nearest.) There is something of the *blasé* or *roué*, or whatever you like to call it,

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 26th May, 1916.



about him. Sweet things had turned sour on his palate. I have known one or two men (of good powers and delicate perceptions) who felt as he does. They would understand what he means, for instance, by "mummy posset." It is useless writing about it unless you understand it, and how should you understand it? Yet it means something—real intense experience, not an empty gibe.

That is by the way. But I do think Donne morbid, in the strict sense of that word. His mastery of disgust and terror is almost insane. He cannot be treated as merely insane, nor can he be treated as a subtle sane thinker—the truth lies between, and would be intelligible only to those who have felt and known what he felt and knew.

This (if it is true) adds to the value of a full statement, in order, of the facts. I think you could make a little book that, at any rate, would be essential to the study of Donne.

But Donne is not romantic. (I think he attracts some people because they think he is romantic.) Romance is made out of dreams, aspirations—all that might have been. Donne's best stuff is made out of experience.

I hate him, but I am fascinated, and I think I know in glimpses what he felt and meant.

All that passage about "falling out of the hands of God" when I first saw it, thrilled me, but now I can't bear it. None of us, thank God, ever can fall out of his hands. It is a wicked suggestion.

R. W. CHAPMAN

*Ferry Hinksey, 30 Jan., 1919.*

I think these books are a good plan. Your Johnson will be A.1. Indeed I think you are the best living Johnsonian. (There are very few, and they run to the —— type. A comic man with a loud voice and indelicate manners is all the public asks.)

I have always wanted to see Macaulay ousted. To put

him in would be rank insincerity. We know that he knew nothing of Johnson.

As for me, I'm flattered,<sup>1</sup> and of course quite agreeable, but I think it rather dangerous (for me.) You can't tell whether an author is alive until he's dead. If the last appearance of my essay on this earth were in your edition, then your edition will read hereafter like an edition of Addison, say, by Blair or one of the Scotch professors (whose incomparable mastery of the principles of criticism gives unique authority to his elegant and illuminative essay on the Prince of English prose-writers.) But only till he hops the twig. The twig once hopped, you never hear a word more of all that cackle.

I will bring round the Shaks. emendations—by you and Bradley. There's no doubt you're an editor.

You won't have noticed, nor will anyone, but no paper or journal or weekly that I have seen has reviewed my last book. It occurred to me the other day that it's a boycott of *The War and the Press*. This sort of boycott has happened to only one other writer that I know of, Miss Marie Corelli, and for exactly similar reasons. *She was very angry.*

### TO H. A. L. FISHER

*Ferry Hinksey, 27 March, 1919.*

It is a pleasant and flattering suggestion,<sup>2</sup> but I can't think of it. I have my Air History to write; it will take three years, I think; and if I held an administrative post, complaints of my neglect of my work would arise, and would be just. Moreover, though I belong to the new Universities, and believe in them, administration is not my job. I could get on with all kinds of odd fish on the Staff;

<sup>1</sup> *Flattered*: by the proposal to include in this volume (it was published in 1922) his Leslie Stephen lecture on Johnson.

<sup>2</sup> A suggestion that he should be nominated for the Vice-Chancellorship of Sheffield University.

I like business men, because they don't fuss ; and I could make a speech now and then. There my qualifications end. My method would be open house one evening a week, whether I was there or not, for staff and government—with sandwiches, such drinks as are left within our reach, and plenty of tobacco. It has always been my belief that in this way a College could run itself.

I go on like this because I'm pleased to have it suggested ; but I can't. Long ago a little lot of people wanted me to be put up for Glasgow, and my instinct (" not my job ") was as strong then as it is now. I have been a Professor so long (since the summer I took my degree at Cambridge in 1885) that I have ceased to mind it, and I shall die a Professor, in great content.

I have every sympathy with those who attain the upper reaches of the air, where it is difficult to breathe, and you have to carry your own oxygen with you. We are dependent on them : someone has got to do it. So more power to your engine ! And very many thanks.

#### TO GILBERT MURRAY

*Ferry Hinksey, 9 May, 1919.*

" Not here, not here, my son " <sup>1</sup> as Mrs. Hemans (I think) remarks. The Pres. of Magd. is the very man.

Style doesn't thrive *in vacuo*—nor in competitions. Grace belongs to movement and purpose. The merely graceful are invalids. And so on.

I hope there will also be an essay with a larger prize, for Fellows of Colleges, on Good Manners.

Why have dancing-masters never been held in high esteem ?

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Marlborough wanted to give a prize for the best phrase or epigram. He applied to me and I tried eagerly to shift the burden on other shoulders. G.M.

I am very busy, but you have perturbed my mind.

The Best Phrase, or Sentence, or Paragraph, would be for fun. The young would take to it. Why not an Essay of not less than 15 and not more than 150 words?

What about a prize for the chastest deed—to be performed, for example's sake, in public?

Is there no chance of an offer for the best dressed loafer?

### TO MRS. BUSK

*Ferry Hinksey, 16 May, 1919.*

Thank you so very much for the book.<sup>1</sup> It contains all that I wanted, and much more that delights me—especially the Broad Teeth and that wonderful letter from your son to his younger brother. I was at King's, Cambridge, but, alas, too early for the Broad Teeth.

Before the War we were far behind other nations in Air work. We are now an easy first. The change was achieved by the work of men not so very numerous, among whom your son, as I have long known, ranks high. My business is with the War itself, but I felt I must know something of the earlier makers of our success. I wish I could always get so clear and convincing a portrait of men whose work is important.

Your book gives life to the scientific story. I am so glad to have it and I cannot thank you enough.

### TO MISS M. W. CANNAN

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 June, 1919.*

Do you know, I have just opened your parcel. It has lain here for days because a man wrote to me and told me he was sending me the MS. of his book on Swift—for me to read. So I just let it lie for a bit, thinking it was Swift.

<sup>1</sup> A memoir by Mrs. Busk of her son, killed in 1914, *Edward T. Busk, Pioneer in Flight*.

I have read it all through, every word.<sup>1</sup> It is heart-rending. Almost terribly naked—the record part of it, I mean, like those poems about the news.

I think you should publish it, and I wouldn't leave out the non-War poems. (There is a ducky one about Grace's house.) I don't know whether you will write better. I think you will, in a way, at a greater distance. But if a book is published, it's off your mind, and can look after itself, whereas if you keep it in a desk it's an anxiety.

Won't you try some poems in tight forms? If grief and pain can get into them, they're all right. I mean something not less complicated than a (regular) sonnet, or stanzas like, say, the Lucrece stanza, or *Thyrsis*. There are beautiful things in your poems, mixed, here and there, with the sense of the steel on the bare nerve.

I don't know anything about it. God bless you.

Lucie is out. She shall have it.

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 18 July, 1919.*

I can't do it. I am fixed for years. And I don't like Education.

I met Lutyens yesterday. He has a monument to the Dead in Whitehall. He wanted a burning brazier on the top of the cenotaph, but the Fire Brigade objected.

I hope Methuen will understand the difficulty felt by an author who writes in the hope of pecuniary gain rather than in the interests of Education when he is asked to do work for a publisher who takes exactly the opposite view. But I do wish I could oblige you.

<sup>1</sup> *In War Time*. Poems by May Wedderburn Cannan.

## TO MISS M. W. CANNAN

*Ferry Hinksey, 21 Nov., 1919.*

I don't hate reviewing, but I can't do this just now. Too much Oxford, and too much learning.

They are good poems, very. He enjoyed the War, as fate and tragedy, where Julian Grenfell enjoyed it as an occupation brought to him by great good luck. But the enjoyment, struck like sparks by danger out of courage, is unmistakable.

Oxford is horribly busy. I hope the dead know how splendidly they buzzed the wheel. But they did better than know, they believed.

Some of your poems are better than I knew. The prize ones wear well.

Is it fancy? I seem to find a splendid temper in all my young. They don't give a damn. Perhaps they never did, but I didn't know it, nor perhaps did they. Now they have been tested, and they know a lot. I am a pacifist for all reasonable purposes, but I dare not deny that there are some wonderful things which we have and which nothing but war can give.

## TO JOHN SAMPSON

*Ferry Hinksey, 3 Dec., 1919.*

I am taking your Donne MS. to the Press this afternoon. I mentioned it yesterday to one of them. He merely groaned, and asked no eager questions. The sort of groan a man gives when he hears his wife's mother, a lady of costly habits and no fortune, has determined to live in her daughter's house. It was a compliment, really. He didn't see how to escape. He regards you as the most expensive of his friends. £1,000 for the Romany book & £750 for Blake. And now Donne. They sent the Romany book to Henry Bradley (the severest of critics) secretly hoping he would damn it, and he blessed it altogether. He said it was a pioneer book and must be printed as it stands. The speci-

men sheet that I saw is very pretty. Still, if you were to take to drink (not an easy thing to do) and a movement were on foot to restore you to scholarship by getting you into a home, and supplying you with ink and paper, I am ashamed to say that I fear the Press would not subscribe. When they speak of you it is always reverential, but there is an odd reminiscence about it of Sinbad and the Old Man of the Sea. They say that they know three people (all editors) who will want your Oldisworth, and these three will ask for complimentary copies.

Where you have them is that they are interested in Donne—the road to ruin for a publisher.

I don't know what they will do. Of course the thing should be put on record.

I was going to write to you, about nothing. We are petering out, my boy, and year follows year, and I rather hoped that when you have done smashing the Press we might have a drink together. I don't want that old sensualist who made such a fuss about death to be one of the party. Which reminds me—Lucie remarked the other day that radicals and vegetarians and humanitarians all have a curious skull-like appearance, and look bald even when they have hair, like ——— and ——— and old ——— has just a touch of it—to which Charles Whibley replied: "It is the mark God puts on them, so that we may know them."

Well, I'm off, with your joyous Christmas Card, to the Press. I'm sorry for you, Maud.

TO V. D. S. PINTO

*The Hangings,  
Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,  
6 Dec., 1919.*

Since U.C.S. moved to Hampstead I believe it has cultivated *esprit de corps*. It had none in my time. The education of continuing to breathe in a crowd was the benefit one got. I remember the place affectionately for two

friends, both long dead. The masters (as I now realise) were overworked and underpaid. They wanted to get home. A sympathetic creature called Masterman took an interest in his pupils and attended debating societies and the like. I liked it; it was a pirate's education; but I cannot feel to it otherwise than as a street Arab feels to Fleet Street. The College was a different thing.

So you see. If you want me to preside over the Old Fleets I shan't refuse. But I think Professor Perkin is the man. I was only in large lower classes, where we sat alphabetically, and as my bench was one side of the door two or three of us spent the time in silent tugs of war, and raids on the bench the other side. The master droned in his sleep. Here and there there was the pathetic figure of a boy who wanted to learn. In the Latin Class (the highest that I reached) old Harris made jokes about his age. None of us cared how much it fell short of infinity. My neighbours were mostly smart commercial boys who out of self-respect told incompetent indecent stories of the school boy brand.

When people talk of school advantages, I think loneliness (contented, in a philosophic way) was the advantage I found.

TO E. Y. DANIEL

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 Dec., 1919.*

Queer how our letters crossed. I wrote mine on a sudden impulse from nowhere, so I suppose it was telepathy. All that it said has been in my mind for months.

I was delighted and amused with your enclosure. Resolved—that the legs of the Lord Mayor as painted by the artist shall be exhibited and that the artist shall be asked to proceed with the rest of the body, but that the question whether the whole body be exhibited shall be reserved for further consideration. Resolved: That all further portraits painted for the Govt be deposited in a cellar with a view to avoiding complications.



Well, I'm not in the least alarmed. What bothers me is what I told you. If only I can please myself I don't mind the cellar.

Of course I should like to be allowed to speak for my bantling before the Committee of midwives when they are met to consider whether it shall be stifled. No history of contemporary events could ever appear if all concerned had votes on it.

Commanding persons are not accustomed to criticism. That's one trouble. I don't (and shan't, I think,) blame anyone in my book.—The Admiralty, for instance, virtually chucked the Air for a most crucial year—1911-12. I think this was intelligible and natural. It was not far-sighted, but you can't expect efficient men to be invariably far-sighted in other men's jobs.

If the Admiralty object to a mild explanation of this kind, then a true history can't be written, except for the cellar. Omniscience has already been sufficiently celebrated in the Psalms of David.

I happen to be pleased just now with what I have just been writing as the moral of the "Mayfly" disaster. I blame no one—there is no one to blame. But there were some men who saw what was involved, and who understood war in the air before it came. I praise them. Censures are mostly wrong.

I do wish I could come up and dine. But I mustn't, during this precious vacation. I will come in the latter half of January for a couple of days. Then may I dine with you?

Remember what I wrote. I want only to get my own *conditions* for writing—on any *terms*. A book's not a book if it has to be written before the author has anything to say.

There will be difficulties, of course. I don't see how I can do without a character sketch of Trenchard, the most single-minded man I ever knew, even if it's only for the cellar.

## TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, Xmas Day, 1919.*

About 500 of the Press lined the road for Cannan's funeral—all on their own. He had been *piano* and, it now seems, failing, for a year. The war did it.

He can't really be spared by those four devoted women. But I think the War has changed the gear a little, so that death counts for less. Not that that can make any difference to Mrs. Cannan.

The coffin lay on trestles in St. Peters in the East, while the V.C. read argumentative passages from St. Paul over it. I thought it so like Cannan to criticise these passages by silence. The Heads, occupying the Choir, showed a grisly familiarity with the funeral service, and mumbled their abracadabras in a kind of bustling unison. They were many of them older than Cannan and they recited as if they liked it. But perhaps that is fancy.

I haven't seen the family. The girls are splendid metal, and don't flinch. All four stood by the grave side.

No one else in Oxford would be missed in the comparison. Chapman says that about half of the University mourners were Cannan's appointments. I was one—his and D. B. Munro's.

## TO MRS. DOWDALL

*Ferry Hinksey, 31 Jan., 1920.*

I had a great day yesterday with Byron in a crowded hall. I had worked through all my proper lectures, so I just took some of his volumes and sat down behind them, and apologised for having no Lecture, and offered some conversational remarks. It was impudent, but colloquial.

Afterwards some of the audience, and not the worst of them, came and said they liked it ever so much better than a lecture. It was a good deal about boxing and prizefighting and gambling. Also quotations from Lord B. with running comments.

“ Though human, thou didst not deceive me,  
Though woman, thou didst not forsake.”

(‘There’s a monstrous libel ! But almost anyone would elope with him on that ticket)—and so on.

So I think I can get through the term on the new plan.

I see that Conan Doyle says there’s no food, or sex, or sleep in Heaven. I say, O God, the poor gentleman does not seem to have done any research work on boredom, which is Heaven’s ailment.

TO MRS. CHAPIN

*Ferry Hinksey, 6 March, 1920.*

I don’t know that I can advise, for it is a problem that I have never been able to solve for myself. The girls at the Colleges here are happy, I think, and in the main contented. They certainly learn a good deal, and they surprise me by their writing—so good, and clear, and sensible.

On the other hand, they live in a backwater, under a sort of school-ma’am government, during three or four of the most important years of life. If they have to teach for a living, it is, I think, the best thing they can do. If not, they still learn a great deal—but I doubt. A woman’s college is unavoidably a rather narrow world. It does no harm, I think, to those who have a free home, and are in the way of seeing many sorts of people.

I like the verses, and can’t judge them. What happens to a mind between fifteen and twenty is so important that before fifteen gives you very little clue to after twenty. The best thing to do is to encourage your daughter to go on, without digging to look at the roots. It has given me a kind of fright to notice the unhappy effect of public fame on young writers, who, after all, wrote to express themselves and to please themselves, not to challenge the world. “ Go on ” is the right advice.

I wish I could be more useful. My only certainty is an enormous reverence for youth and free growth.

## TO HIS SON VALENTINE

*Ferry Hinksey, 5 April, 1920.*

I was awfully sorry to hear of Captain Sparkes' death. Vove saw it in the papers. Where do the verses you quote come from? They are true.

I have been reading a large blue-book called "Notes as Aids to Submarine Hunting," March 1918. It is cheering to find that the submarine by that time was almost collared. The risks run by a submarine are really frightful. And the timidity of the Germans appears once again. The last time I met it was in a book by a Landwehr man in occupied Belgium. He said all lights were out by order, and it was terrible to have to go to your billet in the dark. I suppose ogres, if we knew them better, are a mass of nervous sensibility.

That's a big bribe they offer you. £100 a year for life, or the chance of blueing it all on a farm or the like in a couple of years. No one can advise you. Whatever you do, you'll regret it. But I think you'll regret it more out of the Navy. I suppose prospects will brighten for those who remain. And isn't there an off-chance that you might get a station where Marge could live on shore?

Anyhow the offer is better than I expected. Has no satirist got to work yet? "How to have a strong Navy—Under pay, and bribe all officers to leave it. If they are good and experienced, bribe them heavy."

## TO SIR GEORGE PARKIN

*Ferry Hinksey, 23rd April, 1920.*

The name of our man is ———. Nichol Smith agrees with me in recommending him. He has done some good work; he has plenty of life and sympathy and he is liked. Scottish in type, but you won't mind that and you can't help it—I have never even heard of an Englishman

who believed in a University except as a social engine. Here and there an English crank thinks well of the intellect ; the funny thing about a Scot is that he thinks well of the intellect without being a crank. It is a mystery. But I think you should see —. Of course we have said nothing to him. He has plenty of spirit and I think he would go. There's another advantage—being a Scot, exile is his profession.

### TO EVAN CHARTERIS

*Ferry Hinksey, 11 May, 1920.*

I am wading deep in the sand, so letters got left. But I battened on Tanks, and enjoyed it enormously. Nothing like it since Benvenuto Cellini. I *should* like to have Brown's account. (I think that was his name.) What ailed him at you ? I believe he thought you were a fancier, an epicure in experience. Anyhow, that's what gives your book its singular value. I laugh with pleasure when after a quite convincing portrait of some jolt-head or other I come on the words which always follow—"I liked him very much." If you were to add, "I would not have had him otherwise for worlds," that would be true, too.

Some day I will offer a visit. Not at once, for my visits just now are mole-runs, not perches.

We have had Belloc here, full of wit and anecdote and social philosophy—so to call it.

### TO HIS DAUGHTER PHILIPPA

*Ferry Hinksey, 23 June, 1920.*

It was awful good of you to write to me. As for education, I don't know nuffin about it, but I'll tell you what. These ladies at the Colleges who think it is splendid to be intellectual, spend most of their time in being examined. It's not they who run the world, not by a long chalk. They

don't count, and then they often get sniffy, and talk a great deal about the intellect. But if you use the intellect you don't need to talk about it ; you can put it across the talkers. The only thing good to study is something that catches you and excites you when once you have given it a chance. I hope you will choose what you like best, and then you shall hear lectures or teachers who know and care about it.

The world is a curious and various place. The great thing to do in it is to be decent ; anything else is mostly luck. The most of us get some chunks of luck, and the best of us are all right even if they don't.

#### TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, 3 July, 1920.*

. . . All the same, we are amazingly well off after this War, but the papers talk all the time of the restless egotists who tried to lose the War, and leave out of account the millions of public spirited people who won it. These have gone back into private life, but now we know they are there. I am tired of the newspapers and their avoidance of everything normal. Our public conversation and reflection is carried on almost wholly by neurotic cripples. There ain't going to be no revolution—not in England.

#### TO E. Y. DANIEL

*Ferry Hinksey, 1 August, 1920.*

I wanted a little talk with you, but next time is all right. I hope to be up Tuesday next week, and to be dining, in my own right, at the United Services.

Someone said to me the other day that Naval Officers, in conversation tend to drag the talk round to their own affairs. I said I hadn't noticed this ; that we have plenty of bishops at the Athenaeum, and that I am in favour of exchanging them, at a low valuation, for junior Naval Officers.

## TO WALTER PECK

*Ferry Hinksey, 3 August, 1920.*

We are driven back on the great law—what you can print (except as a luxury) is what enough people want. You can't *publish* antiquarian matter, however good, and make it pay. People are interested in their own little lives and prospects.

This must be true, or why are there learned societies—even for printing Early English Texts !

I don't lament this—far from it. *Shelley* is dead, and we each have only one life. Even Harriet Westbrook was more interested in herself than in Shelley, and she knew him. If she were alive now I don't believe she would subscribe to a Shelley Society.

## TO MISS SPEARING

*Ferry Hinksey, 4 Sept., 1920.*

I am glad you are to lecture. I hope they pay you well. These hard times !

Trustees are often like that. I should think the thing could be worked by concerted importunity. Of course they wouldn't send the MS. away.

As for Donne, of course he fascinates—men *and* women.

I should have to write an essay to say what I think. I think his imagination wonderful, and his intellect even more wonderful—if the two are not one.

I think him morbid. No harm in that, it produces strange tints. I remember how the "Out of the hands of God" sermon fascinated me till I thought, a few minutes later, how false and impossible it all is.—Manichee !

Here is an extract from Stevenson's *Fables* :—

"And when they were all dead ?" said the reader.

"They were in God's hands, the same as before," said the book.

"Not much to boast of, by your account," said the reader.

"Who is impious now ?" said the book. And the reader put him on the fire.

Donne was an impassioned abandoned sensualist. No harm in that, or in the taste of food, however delicious. But he has some of the marks of a *tired* sensualist. There is fatigue in his rigours. And there is harm in dogmatic fatigue.

He is hardly ever tender, is he? He had enormous passion and very little affection. It's funny how little of a *person* his wife is, by his rendering. He has few of the quiet little things that spell spiritual comfort.

He was a very great man.

If these short-hand notes were challenged I should have to write an Essay. I can't; I haven't time.

His violent indecencies are all intellectual—he faced up to the paradox of man. I speak with diffidence, but I think he knew less of the mind of woman than any great writer I ever met. First passion, then fatigue, and understanding slipped out between them.

P.S. Your scheme, which is modest, chronological, and bibliographical, seems all right. More ambitious things can easily be tucked away in it, here and there.

TO MRS A. H. CLOUGH

*Ferry Hinksey, 24 Sept., 1920.*

We had such a good time, mooning around, and being driven by your old Scotch Professor.

Now I have to steady myself, to give evidence, as it is called, to the Commission.<sup>1</sup> Hoping for nothing again.

I am meditating an utterance on social questions. To the effect, shortly, that it's no good making other people do things. You must do them yourself, and trust to infection to spread it. Resolute Government and Bolshevism are equally no good, as anyone can see. The artist is all right, until he forgets himself and tries to compel others.

<sup>1</sup> Oxford University Royal Commission.



This is so plain that I don't know how to make it into twenty pages. I reckon I shall leave it alone.

Some Managers will be saved because they are encouragers.

I would put down interference with a strong hand, and would interfere with nothing else. Murder is interference. So is Prohibition. Hang the lot!

I am tired of the Law. I wish I had had the defence of Mrs. Bamberger. "This little animal," I should say, "ministers to pleasure and amusement. It has no moral ideas. It does not know the difference between right and wrong. To be pompous with it and make it swear is ridiculous. For all that we know it may be a good little animal in its own kind."

Of course I would put it better, but I think the jury might sit up and listen if there were no absurd heroics.

But this is a Collins. I can't help that. The reason why I don't mind dying is that the people who stand for liberty all want to compel.

#### TO WALTER PECK

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 Oct., 1920.*

I have just read your kind notes on Shelley questions.

I don't suppose Timothy<sup>1</sup> ever consented to see Harriet. If she had been a wise young woman (there are *some*) so that while sympathising with her own generation she understood the affections and prejudices of her elders and the strength of society, she might have been of incalculable use to Shelley.

You are becoming very Shelley-learned. He's worth it. Also your book is well worth while if it only walks straight up to the facts and does not blink at them. Shelley had

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a conversation which Mr. Peck had had with W. R. a few evenings before. W. R. had advanced the thesis that Shelley's friendships were all grounded, not in affection, but admiration for the talents or achievements of the persons to whom he attached himself.

passion, no end of it, exalted, unselfish passion. I think (as I told you) that he had a very small measure of affection, which adjusts itself, and makes life cosy—or easy, if you like, but I say *cosy*. No doubt he had affection for his infants. Bottle-nosed old men and angular old women were beyond him—yet how amiable they are, once you have forgiven them for being themselves. His passions were wise with an almost supernatural wisdom, but it's the natural wisdom of the affections that is our comfort day by day.

Mind you don't write any professional English, the garbage of words that conceals lack of thought. "The development of the poet's individuality constitutes a subject of profound interest" and that sort of thing. Write for Oxford cabmen—in that way you will say more in less space. In most American university books I can't see the fish for the weeds.

Don't ever say "mentality." Except where it is used to mean nothing, there's no need for it. Not that I accuse you of saying it.

#### TO KURT EITZEN <sup>1</sup>

*The Hangings*, 24 Nov., 1920.

If we could meet, we should have a good time. Talk gets things right where letters are helpless. Meantime we hammer away; you express your hopes for the ruin of England, and bully me about who are and who are not great English authors, and this I take (for so it is meant) as an act of friendship.

If you want to read a great living English author, read Thomas Hardy, if you want to read an author of twenty times Bernard Shaw's imagination, who combines truth and poetry in dealing with Ireland, read J. M. Synge. He is dead, but he was much younger than Bernard Shaw.

<sup>1</sup> An old pupil, who left Oxford to return to Germany in the summer of 1914, and who wrote to him when the War was over.

But what you really want is authors who flatter you, who tell you what you want to believe, and who abuse England. Well, the best attacks on England have always been made by English authors, like Byron, and these authors have always made their popularity first in England and then abroad. But Bernard Shaw, you say, is not an English author. If Ireland became an independent republic, where do you think he would live? How many months out of the last forty years do you think he has spent in Ireland? Where but in England do you think, would he find a people who when he attacks them are amused and give him money and reputation?

Do please remember what you thought of the soft English before the War. Then also your people believed only what flattered them. Now, having learned nothing, they start building up new fables.

I am openminded about Germany, for I know that I do not know the Germans. I am willing to believe what you tell me about them. On the English you are ridiculous—with apologies, I could satirise them far better than you can. All you want is a bogey-man. The anti-German feeling in England is a good deal faded. Many people here believe, as I do, that things cannot be right till we come to an understanding. If that understanding does not come at once, can you wonder? Do remember the amiable programme of your late war. It is all in print, by German authors and soldiers of high repute. Some of them already have begun to look to "the next war" for the fulfilment of their hopes. No understanding will come that way. You really have to choose whether you want an understanding or a revenge. You can't have both, though sometimes you write as if you could.

A revenge would almost certainly take the form of some ten million more men killed and wounded, the rest, on both sides, impoverished, and other things pretty much as they were before. But if you must have it, you must. The England you would have to fight is not (I think you know)

the England of Bernard Shaw's works. That would be a very easy conquest.

I am glad to escape from these things into private good will and to wish long happiness and long peace to your wife and son. I hope they are both well. I am going to send your son a little present (from an English devil). Please send me, if you will, his full name and the date of his birth.

It is hard white frost here, with mist, so that Oxford, which is unchanged in appearance, is invisible from the windows.

### TO MRS. WALTER CRUM

*Nov. 1920.*

Perhaps you're wrong about your plays. Every author thinks that what he takes trouble about is his best. But it often isn't. What you throw off sometimes contains little real things that can't be got by effort.

I have a hell of a book nearing a crisis—Vol. 1 with maps. I'm sick of it—but not of the job. Meantime term is on, and I have to address (1) A Labour Club, (2) An Anglo-American Club, (3) A Johnson Club—all undergraduates. What shall I say to the Labour Club? I have a plan, but it's rather strong meat for them.

You see, I'm at the same job as you are.

The worst of it is I enjoy life too much. Bits of it—in London—with Colonels and Commodores.

What a pity that Labour is so damned vulgar. Every one of them. It's as if they didn't know what good work is. They don't—those of them who talk about it.

Lucie is frightened of the music and azaleas in the Winter Garden. I'm afraid she doesn't want them. She says "The horrors of the Crystal Palace; and the smell of the Poor." I'm sorry, but that's what she says. She seems to think a photograph of Philip (which she sends) is better. How beautifully serious all young things are! My love to Jocelyn and to Hy.

## TO GEORGE GORDON

*Ferry Hinksey, 11 Jan., 1921.*

. . . My old Vol. 1 is in its travels round the War Office, Air Council, Admiralty, etc. God knows when it will come back. It's a ridiculous system—not all these men can judge.

It's not a real book ; though it has some fair bits. One has to learn *while* one writes.

. . . As for theses—look at America. Harvard had 30 teachers of English literature when I last heard of it, twenty years ago. . . .

The worst of it is some thesis writers *can* write, but they are frightened and anxious to conform to some bogus standard or other, so they all become pompous and windy. Inflated frogs !

The first problem for a writer is " Why write anything ? " it's there that we stick. Universities accept and encourage appallingly inadequate answers to this question. I suppose there are two or three years in many men's lives when they may get good from playing the ape—but that's all.

If any young man could found a society where people speak only what they think and tell only what they know—in the first words that come to hand—that would be, at last, a school of Literature.

But of course we must carry on. Prophets are no good : they get pupils and imitators and start silly fashions. God forgive us all ! If I am accused on Judgment day of teaching literature, I shall plead that I never believed in it and that I maintained a wife and children. I don't know what old Bradley and G. Murray will plead, but I long to hear.

## TO AIR-MARSHAL SIR HUGH TRENCHARD

*Ferry Hinksey, 13 Jan., 1921.*

It is a pleasure to hear that you liked my little book. It was written, years ago, as a preface to the last edition of

Hakluyt's Voyages, and then was reprinted separately. The subject was new to me, and the essay was written in a month, but, by some queer accident, it is (I think) the best of my books. But I did not dare to hope that you would have time to read it.

The people who took to the sea in the days of the Armada are very like the people who took to the air a few years ago. It is the same old country.

I want to thank Lady Trenchard for her news of you when you were in hospital. I do hope you are all right, you, and all of you.

TO DOCTOR F. G. PROUDFOOT

(President of the Oxford Caledonian Society) <sup>1</sup>

(?) 24 Jan., 1921.

You know how sorry I am to miss your festivity. . . . I used to argue with Henley about Burns. He sent me the proof of his famous monograph. I told him that he did not understand Burns (though he has said some fine and true things), and we had it to and fro. Once at the end of a long argument he said, "Well, perhaps you are right." Oddly enough R. L. Stevenson, who was a Scot, went (as I think) further astray than Henley. They both treat Burns as if he were the manager of his passions, whereas he well knew that he was the generous victim of them. They make a Lothario of him—which is absurd. I don't suppose there is another poet who has made a great body of poetry out of nothing but the feelings common to all humanity. If anyone will tell me which are the poems of Burns that he does not like, I will tell him where he fails a little in humanity. An old friend of mine, a Scot, arguing long ago against teetotalism (which I ask your pardon for mentioning) said that to lay too much stress on length of life is a mistake.

<sup>1</sup> This letter was read at the Burns dinner on 25 Jan. 1921, and printed in the reports of the dinner in the *Oxford Chronicle* and *Oxford Times*. The original has disappeared.

Life; he said, has two dimensions, length and breadth, and for himself he proposed to live a life which should make up in breadth for anything that it might lack in the other dimension. The life of Burns was not long, but it was broad and it was high. He is as proud as Satan (the comparison is his own) and as humble as a child.

### TO EDMUND GOSSE

*Ferry Hinksey, 10 Feb., 1921.*

I have been ill since I wrote—Gastric Flu, and Fever. I'm better, but still no good.

Now that you are Secretary of Grillions I hope you will always be there (when I am).

You are very illuminative about the portrait.<sup>1</sup> I don't know anything about portraits. It seems to me there are two sorts of a great man. The first is flat and competent and rather like, only it has a way of making you glad the great man is dead.

The other does not much resemble the great man in the eyes of those who saw him daily, but it has a vitality of its own and, with luck, it knocks out the great man and takes his place, so that his wife, who failed to recognise it as a portrait of her husband, ends by saying that it is the only likeness. I don't suppose Blanche's is the second kind.

### TO HIS DAUGHTER PHILIPPA

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 March, 1921.*

I forgot about Tragedy. It has to end unhappily. But a great Tragedy ends happily-unhappily. The Greeks invented tragedy, and Aristotle, who was a Greek, said that by awakening pity and terror tragedy purged, or purified, the

<sup>1</sup> A Portrait of Thomas Hardy it was proposed to buy for the nation.

spectators of these emotions. Scores of books have been written on what he meant, but it is plain that mere squalid misery won't do for tragedy—the action, or behaviour of the people involved must be noble ; they must be superior to their misfortunes.

Chaucer says that tragedy is when people fall out of prosperity into wretchedness, and says also that he doesn't like to hear of it, and a little of this sort of thing is enough. He says this at the end of the (so-called) Monk's Tale.

I believe Vove is coming home (for a bit, anyhow) to-morrow. Did I tell you I went to see a boxing tournament Oxford versus the Army, before I got ill? I liked it. I daresay I could take you some day, if you like. It was rather bluggy at times, but the fighters all had supper together in great content and peace. There were two or three girls there ; they ate sweets and looked at the other spectators all the time.

#### TO TUCKER BROOKE <sup>1</sup>

*Oxford, 4 April, 1921.*

It was jolly seeing you. I don't worry any longer about Anglo-American talk. H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, and many others will of course continue to arrange the future of your continent, but it doesn't matter. The wars America has fought make a jolly good record—always for humanity, civilisation, and decency. If she fights us, which God willing she won't, very likely she would be right.

Someone said the other day that America and Ireland are a little dangerous for the same reason, both are secretly rather dissatisfied with the part they played in the War. Neither had a deep draught of it. If the Irish had all been dressed in green and sent to help the French, history would be altered. If America had come in in 1915 millions of lives would have been saved, and things would be better

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English at Yale University.



and more manageable to-day. So I think, and so I think America thinks. But America's old habit of placing a chip on her shoulder and keeping a jealous eye on poor old England could not be broken down in a year.

An Anglo-American war would be a dreadful treasonous business. Little parties from both sides would hobnob in No Man's land. We should (I hope) have drinks to offer you, and you (I hope) would offer us terrapin stew.

I stick to my old opinion ; peace between England and America is certain if the two peoples see enough of each other ; and between England and France if the two peoples don't see too much of each other.

Newspapers, theorists, expounders, are all to the bad. The stupid English squire's way with them is the best—"I daresay what you say is all right. Have a whiskey and soda."

#### TO V. COTTON

*Ferry Hinksey, 2 July, 1921.*

I am very grateful to you for the investment of my £2,000. I want you to choose whichever of them you prefer, so I have left it to you to strike out one or other on the enclosed paper, which I have signed.

My own views have no right to be called views ; they are rambling imaginations. If we had war, or if there was war, with China ! If we lost hold on the Argentine ! About San Paulo, which I suppose is Brazil, I know nothing.

The English Industrials are subject to similar imaginings. I suppose the A Scheme is better because of the prospect of increase of capital. If money were gold, I think I should bury it, and cease to trouble anyone.

I gather that you prefer the A Scheme. You must be very familiar with the greedy and nervous mind of the investor, so I want to add that I shall be very glad to accept your decision, and that, whatever happens hereafter, I shall continue to be grateful to you, and shall not grouse. In

short, I hope I am fit to lose £2,000, as it were, at bridge. But I should like to *call* well.

TO E. V. LUCAS

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 July, 1921.*

The heavens rain odours on you ! It is a delicious pipe, and I am just through with the awkwardness of its virginity. I hope I shall die first ; I am tired of being the surviving mourner. What's the use of saying man is a bubble ? He habitually outlives wood and metal.

I didn't dream of ever having another gift pipe (I've had three or four), so I am in great spirits and very thankful.

TO J. C. DENT

*Ferry Hinksey, 15 July, 1921.*

It was a great pleasure to get your letter. I found you out only in examination. The best were so good that a First is a high degree.

I have often told my colleague, Professor Wyld, that his god is Pott,<sup>1</sup> and mine is Pan.

Teaching in a School has many drawbacks compared with professing in a University. But I do think it has greater influence. And anyhow literature is like swimming, teacher and pupil must bathe together.

I have so many other things to do, and I read so little, that I am cheered to find that my talk about literature is liked. I daresay my old familiarity with it and my scanty recent reading combine to give a certain landscape effect.

I am always delighted to hear of a good mind at work in a school. Think of the tedium and formality and unreality that the poor children have to suffer. And they do like to be taken into confidence.

<sup>1</sup> August Friedrich Pott (1802-1887), author of *Etymologische Forschungen*, one of the fathers of modern philology.

To J. Y. SIMPSON

*Big Chilling,  
Warsash, Hants,  
7 Aug., 1921.*

If my letter sounded inconclusive it is because I should like the job you offer me. Some years ago I might have been tempted to try the night trains. But I know too much now to venture that. The week would have to pay for the exciting week-end. I dare not. I am not good at switching the mind from one thing to another.

I never saw R. L. Stevenson. My friend was his cousin, R. A. M. S. I believe Sir Sidney Colvin is writing reminiscences of him and others. R. A. M. S. always spoke with great esteem of Colvin and of his kindness to Louis. But the fact remains (a delightful, ironical fact) that the conversation of R. A. M. S., as I knew him, would have bewildered and distressed S. C. Both the cousins were artists to the finger-tips. But the more famous of the two understood his audience as the other never did.

There is something lonely about these Romantics. They will never fit into a convivial celebration as Burns (whom they did not understand) fits in. The delights of exploratory thought, experiments in conduct, and illicit speculation, are very real and wonderful, but they do not keep, any more than plucked flowers keep. In thinking how impossible it is to commemorate R. A. M. S. (or, for that matter, R. L. S.) I begin to understand why people fight against the nature of things and put wax flowers on graves.

To J. S. PHILLIMORE

*Ferry Hinksey, 18 Oct., 1921*

It can't be did, Nohow.<sup>1</sup> Not but what I'm nuts on keeping English proper. But I can't do all that travelling, not

<sup>1</sup> He had been asked to lecture to the English Association in Glasgow

by a long chalk, me being pestered with teaching the young and seeing my book through the press in London, which is called volume one of the history of the War in the Air and am having a lot of trouble with it.

Grammar's a poor thing though useful at times, but syntax is what you and me and all educated people ort to turn to and do our best for so as to get it good.

When I see the chance I'll come to Glasgow. The bother is, I haven't time to think about a lecture. Everyone says just come and give an hour's talk, which is no more to you than a cat having kittens. But if a cat had to have tortoises for the Government between times at an office in London it wouldn't be altogether so simple. Which you may say is only a allegory and no good at all, but it is the terrible truth.

However, if I could get set down in Glasgow to pass the time of day for a bit it wouldn't be me that would be the first to say damn, which is said too often and for the purposes of associated English is not polite. So wishing you all success and profit in getting English properly associated, which is the only proper thing to do, I venture to hope that nevertheless we may meet at some time over Shakespeare and the glasses, and if Shakespeare stays away just carry on with what is left owing to us being true Britons, and not Jews such as Belloc keeps talking about.

To J. C. DENT

*Ferry Hinksey, 29 Oct., 1921.*

It would be impudence in me to pretend to advise you or help you. I never taught in a school. There's *too much* teaching in a school ; so that at best, only some of it can be real. The usual type of successful teacher is one whose main interest is the children, not the subject. I daresay that is, on the whole, a better and more useful type

than the subject-lover, but when the subject-lover does catch them, he has a great success.

Boys are shy of poetry, and of the feelings. But I find that lots of things (from the Bible mostly) which bored me in youth, are remembered, and spring into meaning later on. The teaching has some success, though it gets no applause.

I am a teacher by accident. I had not money enough for the Bar, or anything else, after graduating—second class. I had read a good deal of English literature and philosophy while I was supposed to be reading history, so I got a chance early in the movement for teaching English. But I would rather have missed Cambridge than India, where I expounded Shakespeare etc. to half-baked minds.

I think, in a boys' school I should try to make a good deal of routine exercise, so as to get the hours of real teaching more valued.

You probably teach twice as many hours as anyone ought to.

Well, I can't philosophise about bathing from the basis of an acquaintance with whiskey and soda, or about schools from the basis of University lecturing. In tedious work the best escape is the natural one—reasonable value given for reasonable pay.

Pay is a sane influence. I hope you get some decent holidays.

This is written late at night, with notes waiting in a pile beside me.

TO SIR EDWIN LUTYENS

*The Hangings,  
Ferry Hinksey, near Oxford,  
12th Nov., 1921.*

When I have time (if ever) I will write *The House Wisdom of Solomon Doll* for the Library. Meanwhile I dine along with you some day soon; remember that me and Philippe are to see the Dolls' House.

Extracts from *The Wisdom of Solomon Doll*.

Be a doll.

Remember that the main business of a doll is to be loved and that it must behave in a dolly way. Wax face and blue eyes are nothing if they are not loved.

A golliwog cannot be broken and is seldom seen on the rubbish heap.

But I have no time.

Yours ever,

W. A. R.

TO H.H. PRINCESS MARIE LOUISE

27th Nov. 1921.

It was that wonderful Sir Edwin Lutyens who said that I must write a book for the Dolls' House, and I said I would try, if it can be done quickly at odd times.<sup>1</sup>

I should love to see the Dolls' House. It is exactly on the scale of the Lilliputs in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*: that is, one inch to the foot. Swift keeps to the scale almost exactly, but not so exactly, I dare say, as the Dolls' House.

I am so glad to hear that the Queen takes pleasure in the Dolls' House, and I do hope I may find the time (and the inspiration) to write a tiny book that shall be honoured by standing on its library shelves.

Yours sincerely,

W. A. RALEIGH.

TO MRS. ANNING BELL

Ferry Hinksey, 3 Dec., 1921.

It's a great piece of friendship to give us one of the copies of Charlie's <sup>2</sup> beautiful letter. Lucie is going to keep it in

<sup>1</sup> W. R. did not write his little book.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Anning Bell's son who had died of wounds in France.

her War treasure book. I think Philip has some soldiers that he drew for her.

Soul can't be lost any more than heat or energy. When I read that letter again I almost laughed to think that anyone can speak of Charlie as dead.

### TO HUGH TRENCHARD

*Ferry Hinksey, 20 Jan., 1922.*

Thank you for your letter about the proofs. They are going on all right now. I think I can put in a sentence or two on the keenness of the R.F.C. (who had many of them been infantry officers) to help the infantry.

Jones kindly made a programme for my suggested visit to the Middle East. It seems I can leave London on March 16, reaching Cairo late on the 22nd. Then I can go wherever they are willing to take me—Jerusalem, Baghdad, Basrah,—and get back to London on the 24th. of April. Perhaps, if I stay a little at Jerusalem, I might be flown over the road of the Turkish retreat?

The cost is a good deal more than I thought;—I reckon it will come to £160 or more; but I have no misgivings, it is well worth it. I shall learn more by seeing the places than I can learn in this room.

I am reckoning to pay for my own keep in hotels, and, if I am allowed to join a mess, to pay my own mess-bills. I will take all the care I can to avoid being a nuisance, if only they will fly me.

So there—may I go? Seeing the places, and being with the squadrons, will make the facts much more vivid to me.

A place has been reserved for me on the 16th, but they want it confirmed early next week.

Brancker is so familiar with a hundred things that are new to me, that I don't suppose he realizes how much I pick up on any aerodrome. It was a great pleasure to see you so well. Not worried, either, which is a wonderful thing seeing that you live in the middle of a spider's web.

TO H. A. JONES <sup>1</sup>

*Oxford, March 11, 1922.*

The whole book is like Blindman's Buff. You catch someone and feel his face and guess at him. No doubt you are sometimes too complimentary to an ugly fellow, and then the others, who are not blinded, laugh in their sleeves. Sometimes you say what everyone else had thought without saying it.

I have no time to travel as anything but a sack of potatoes in charge of the military. My chief worry is how to get pipe tobacco for the voyage. One *must* smoke at sea.

## TO H. A. JONES

*P. & O.S.N. Co.,  
S.S. "Egypt," Marseilles,  
17 March, 1922.*

Calm passage. Punctual. Good night. French on the make. Train table d'hôte twenty-five francs, everything extra. Few passengers on boat. This is the Alfred Jingle style, but it contains all I have to say. It won't be easy to work or read, for everyone is on the prowl, looking for someone else to talk to, or to play bridge with. I must be *strong* and refuse bridge at first. Or, at least, so as not to be grumpy, I shall say "Bridge,—delighted. I love to play bridge. Let me see—I always forget—are there four suits or five? Of course I know there are twelve cards in each suit."

Talk is not so easily dealt with. But there are some decent people on board. I have talked with two sad, efficient, disgruntled Indian Colonels, going back to earn their pension. And of course there are social ladies. When I was a lean gawky youth they were not kind to me. I don't blame them, but when they are kind now, I wish they had come earlier.

<sup>1</sup> Author of *Sir Walter Raleigh and the Air History*



Book all right. Small corrections occur to me. Can't make 'em now. Doesn't matter. God be with the Office and all that therein are !

TO H. A. JONES

*The Eastern Exchange Hotel,  
Port Said, Egypt,  
22 March, 1922.*

Here I am at Port Said after a calm and easy voyage. I was met by Squadron-Leader Guilfoyle, on the boat. I am to go by train to Jerusalem tonight (it takes some 17 or 18 hours). There I am to meet Ellington and to be his fellow-guest at the house of the High Commissioner—name of Samuel. He is to drive me to the Nablus Wad. Then to Cairo by aeroplane, and from Cairo direct to Baghdad.

I met Allen here a few hours ago (flew over in No. 3 August 1914). He is full of memories, too late, but may be useful. He could stay only half an hour, for he is just off on leave to England. He advises Sutherland (at Baghdad) and W. R. Read now in Central Africa, soon to be home,—for early memories. Read always *kept a full diary* (I wish we could have had it.) I send these names to you, for I am keeping no diary.

It's going to be tiresome tonight, but once I get to the R.A.F. I think things will be very easy. I can't book a place back till I get to Cairo, but I hear they have me in mind. Baghdad seems to be a gay centre. I came on the boat with Major Lord Gough, a one-armed Irish officer, who has left home to escape the tax collector, and is going to command Arab levies at Baghdad. He will do well, I am sure, he is cool, pleasant, practical, ready witted and original. Indeed he shocked the Anglo-Indian officers on board, but the Arabs, I think, will take to him.

It has all been absurdly easy up to now, thanks to you.

To L. R.

*Government House,  
Jerusalem,  
23 March, 1922.*

. . . Such a day and night. All day at Port Said, then off by train. Changed at Kantara on the Suez Canal, and crossed the Canal on a pontoon bridge to the terminus of the Sinai desert military railway. A train was there booked to start at 5.0 a.m. Luckily I had picked up with a young officer who had been invited to have supper with a unit of the A.S.C. about two miles from Kantara. We joggled off in a cart and the dark, bumping over the road which was no road. Came back and got into the train. By great good luck I got a lie-down bunk. Everyone had to be in the train by 12.0 midnight. Then the officials locked up the station and went home and the train wandered off five hours later. So at last I got here about 6.0.

Tomorrow I am to be driven by car to Nablus and to go on from there on a horse (no road for cars)—to see the ruin of the Turkish Army. On Saturday I am to be flown back to Cairo. On Friday of next week, to Baghdad. It takes two, or with bad luck three, days. At Baghdad I shall stay 10 days. I still hope to ship for home on the 18th. If I can't I will telegraph.

It's going to be taring. But I enjoy it. Tomorrow's the worst day. It's too far to walk if I can stick on a horse.

I've seen so much the last two days I can't begin to describe. It's almost dinner, and I have to be up at 7.0 tomorrow. I have seen Lady Samuel and am here cheek by jowl with Ellington in a palace built by the Kaiser for German pilgrims.

To L. R.

*216 Squadron, R.A.F.,  
Heliopolis, Cairo,  
27 March, 1922.*

. . . Another great fly. I spent yesterday idling at Ramleh, and wandering through the native town, which

you will understand, for you have seen Tunis. I got on very well with No. 14. They are a "great crowd"—to use the language of this place. They had athletic sports while I was there, and 92° in the shade. But it was cool at night. It is cool here, or at least sleepable, but Baghdad, I am told, is different. I was advised to do my sleeping in advance.

I was flown here today from Ramleh, the Jerusalem aerodrome, by a small pilot called Delamain, clever and serious. It is queer to see him in front of you controlling force enough to blow you into atoms. I never got over the exhilaration of the force when the engine is turned full on with a roar, and you scoot away over the grass. Then you suddenly find you are a hundred feet up. We flew at about 5,000' all down the Palestine coast, sometimes over the sea, sometimes over the land, joggling and swaying a good deal from sunbumps. The Sinai desert is very impressive. I looked out for Katia, and spotted it below, a settlement with a few trees among endless sand.

The pilots often admit that you seem to be out of human life, so that it is easy to drop bombs. But the Turkish carnage in the Valley of Death was too much for them; some of them appealed to Allenby, and said it was bloody butchery. He said "You carry on and I'll tell you when it is bloody butchery."

We stopped for lunch at Ismailia, an elegant settlement of French officials of the Cornal. There we broke our tail-skid in landing, and did not get away till 4.30. So we arrived here, a kind of centre of the Middle East Brigade, and the Major (i.e. Squadron-Leader O. Modin) has given me his living room to sleep in. (Compare my behaviour to chance guests.) They are all very kind to me. I think a rumour must have got about that I am on their side.

I am going to Cook etc. tomorrow to try to fix up home before I start on Friday for Baghdad.

I'm glad I've seen Palestine. The British, though few, govern it, and govern this place too.

To L. R.

216 Squadron, Heliopolis,  
30 March, 1922.

My last letter before leaving for Baghdad. We start tomorrow first at dawn, either two or three machines. If all goes smooth we reach Ammān at about noon, and stop the night there. Then next day about 600 miles across the desert to Baghdad. The two pilots of my lot are Horry and Hilton. They had a bad passage here from Baghdad;—had to land in the desert about five times and took three days. But we have a following wind to start back.

Every day if you were here you would see me plod in green slippers and a Burberry across the dusty parade ground to the wooden sheds where the shower baths are. I go twice a day, and it is my chief comfort. It's nice to be hot, because one gets the great pleasures of being cool and of being really thirsty.

Today I go into Cairo in an hour or so to see Cooks and to buy a book or two. I am to have a tender lent me to go in. I am treated like a kind of Army chief. A young man called Humphries, who talks Arabic like a jackdaw, is coming with me to interpret, for I like to talk to non-British.

It is absurd, how much we count for. Half the unrest, I think, is due to the native feeling that it's no use being an Egyptian. In this the British heartily agree.

The pick of our people are not in England. They are here, and all about.

In Jerusalem I saw no sights, and I am seeing none here. I mean tourist sights. But I have seen the pyramids in the distance, as they were meant to be seen. And the Nile.

I'm better than in England, and shall continue so unless I have very bad luck with water or the like. Quite brown I am, except for red.

To L. R.

G.H.Q., R.A.F., Baghdad,  
5 April, 1922.

Just got your letter of the 19th three days after I left. This will go with me by air mail, but as I probably can't get on to the P. & O. boat, but shall come by a French boat, the *Lotus*, it will outrun me by a day or more, and anyhow, I like to feel that I'm writing to you.

My little adventure has beaten hollow anything that I imagined of it. Here I am in great comfort on the ground floor of the late German Residency, the guest of Borton, who commands the very considerable Air Force here. The house opens on a flagged palm garden at the back, raised at the further side as a Terrace over the rushing huge Tigris. I had my first wash for five days when I arrived—an Indian bearer (so nice and understanding) tended me and brought me soda water for my teeth so that I need not use the Baghdad Tigris water. It is delightfully cool and pleasant—the insects (mosquitoes, sandflies, &c. &c.) are not arriving for a week or two yet, when they come in force. But there are no flies in Baghdad in midsummer; they die of the heat, which is about 125° in the shade by day. It is a wonderful city of mixed traders (and what of course no-one ever tells me), very interesting and beautiful, crammed with Eastern nations and faces of all sorts—governed by one of these toy governments that we love to set up (King Feisul, I think) but of course really by the Air Force and a few political agents and soldiers. We are liked in comparison with the late Turks. Well, about my journey. Last Friday I was ready with my kit on the Heliopolis aerodrome at 5.30 a.m. but we did not get off till nearly 10.0. One of the engines of the *Concord*, pal to the *Pathfinder*, in which I flew, would not start. Both machines were Vickers Vimy, the kind that flew the Atlantic and also flew to Australia, for which achievement I now have an enormous respect. We crossed leagues and leagues of giant bunkers

between Cairo and the Canal, then the Sinai desert, always impressive, then rounded the coast into Palestine and struck obliquely across Palestine, leaving Jerusalem plainly visible, a little on our left. Over the northern end of the Dead Sea, where I saw Jericho quite plain. For an hour or more you are over country where no landing is possible without a smash, steep up and down broken rocks and contorted fused rocks, and narrow rocky terraces. The pilot of our machine (we were four in it, him, me, an Air Force Doctor travelling to arrange medical matters, and an engine fitter), the pilot, I say, is a real star pilot, and I am sure that if we had had engine failure he would have side-slipped us to ground on some barely possible spot, crunching up one of the wings and saving us all from anything more than a bit of a bump. They have to be ready to do this. But we flew splendidly, crossed the Jordan and the range of hills beyond and found ourselves in a high wonderful country, like the S. African Veldt, utterly unlike the barren rocky hell-kitchen which is Palestine. About thirty miles of that and down we came by orders on a grassy plain (thin grass) at Ziza, to get more petrol. This was the first time Ziza had been used for this, and it did not work without hitch. There is a railway station at Ziza on the single-line Arab Hedjaz Railway which runs a train once a week for religious purposes. The petrol had not arrived so we sat down and had lunch and I (very imprudently as it proved) used up on self and pals all the nice provisions ; hard-boiled eggs, cheese and lettuce sandwiches and so on that had been given me as a bonus. The local Arabs crowded round us. About 30 of them each with a rifle or musket slung over his shoulder sat gravely in a circle round me while I smoked. I moved away after a bit to speak to one of the pilots and then casually sat down in a new place, but my council was soon round me again. I was very popular. I asked Dalbiac, an R.A.F. officer superintending Ziza, what he did if the Arabs pestered him, and he said " O, just take a stick and drive them away." The fact is, they are like children,

inquisitive, troublesome, but very easily checked or reprov'd, and sensitive on one point only, whether you like them. If you do really like them (it's no good pretending any more than it is with children) you can do anything. "I'm busy, get out, and here's a fill of tobacco for you. No, I haven't enough for you all." They are quite obedient and considerate and happy to watch the great bird. It's extraordinary good luck that the Air Officers are the first Englishmen they have made acquaintance with—quiet, practical people, quite kind to them but offhand, and not in the least *important*, but never inconsiderate or cruel. So they have become our friends and all Arabs are like Mrs. Q—, good at friends and good at enemies, once they know which it is to be.

We slept inside the walls of the half-built station—I in blankets lent me at Heliopolis—and began our acquaintance with Billy tea for every meal. You boil water in an old petrol tin (over petrol if you can't get fuel), throw in the tea (later on we used it two or three times in a bag of canvas), also some *ideal* milk (to distinguish it from real) and ration sugar. Then you sizzle some bacon in your only cooking pot and eat it in your fingers (very good while you live in the open) with ration biscuits, too hard, and the bread was finished the second day, so after that I used to carry scraps of biscuit in my flying coat pocket and suck and chew at them very slowly from time to time. But I anticipate.

We got our petrol and got away all right on Saturday morning. We flew ninety miles over the desert, a queer mottled place, rock and lava and sand and scrub, all spread out flat with eminences that are no more than undulations or bumps in the universal blanket.

Then *Concord* broke a piston and came down. She was flying behind us, and I was sitting alone in the tail seat of *Pathfinder* looking back at her, but I could not communicate with the three in front and I didn't know what *Concord* meant by landing on a huge sand plot about



IN THE DESERT ON THE WAY TO BAGHDAD, APRIL, 1922





five miles round. Hilton spotted it at once and we circled back and settled about a mile from her among the scrub. There was nothing to be done but wait and try the wireless. We got in touch with Ammān, and so with Cairo, and left it to them. (No aeroplane is allowed to fly the desert alone.) Then we settled down—for four days it proved. No water, except what we carried for drinking and for the engines. Food, bully beef, biscuit and billy tea, sleep in your blankets under the planes. We became very skilled at this, digging holes in the hardened mud (as yellow as sand) for hip and shoulder, and padding under the blankets with a kind of giant wild fennel which grows in the desert. The dried stalks of this fennel made quite a good fire. The cold was pretty bad at nights and for two days and a night a 40-mile wind blew steadily with no shelter at all except lying down and covering yourself with blankets.

We were quite happy. The pilots of course bore the burden, but they were absolutely on the spot. Practical, not fussy, very unselfish and quite cheerful.

Mine (called Teddy Hilton) an angel. He was like a mother-hen, you couldn't tell how he ate or looked after himself.

Our accident was complicated by another about 200 miles further on to the mail *from* Baghdad,—another machine down. On the Tuesday we expected help and had a sweep-stake—a shilling an hour, anyone who holds the ticket for the hour when the first machine arrives to take the lot. Four o'clock won with the arrival of Ellington, the new Air Vice-Marshal with two Vickers Vernons, great bumble-bee things with bus-seats as it were in an enclosed frame. So the *Pathfinder* and the Vernons came on here, while other machines came to mend and take back the *Concord*.

The desert (they won't tell you this) is wonderfully beautiful—bathed in all kinds of light and always changing. We saw no four-footed creatures, though there were jackals' dens. Several friendly birds who shared our food. Occasional kite-hawks. Lots of beetles, some very large with

whiskers. Dung beetles trundling their provender about to find a place to store it.

I can't go on. The last long fly was as good as the rest, but the desert can't be described. . . .

To L. R.

*G.H.Q., R.A.F., Baghdad,*  
10 April, 1922.

A horrible dust storm is raging, the dust is blinding even across the river, which at this point is  $1/3$  of a mile broad. I was to fly to Kut today, but that is knocked. I'm glad of a rest.

On Saturday we went with sixteen aeroplanes of all sizes to Hilla, a village about 80 miles from here, to give three swords of honour to three sheikhs who had saved the lives of two pilots attacked by the tribesmen. There was a Durbar tent; Barton, the Group Captain here, head of the Mesopot Air Force, and an absolute daisy, made one of these Air speeches which non-speaking Englishmen make. "On behalf of His Majesty, King George, we wish to show our appreciation of this noble act." Then the Divisional Adviser (an Arab-expert called Dixon) translated, but his speech was four times as long as Barton's, and he was believed to be telling the Arabs all kinds of things on his own.

Then we had lunch with Dixon and his wife in their bungalow on the Euphrates, the only civilised European house within 80 miles.

Then eleven of the aeroplanes, instead of coming home, went and made a demonstration, as a reminder, over two very holy Mahommedan cities in the desert—Nejef and Kerbela,—which are centres of disaffection to the British and to King Feisul. Splendid mosques with huge courtyards full of people. When we circled round about 3 to 4 thousand feet above them, we saw lots of people running about excitedly, to tell the news. We think we did good.

We would not drop on a Mosque, but they don't quite know that. When the three honoured sheikhs were invited at Hilla to climb into the big Vickers Vernon, just to have a look at it (it's a bus aeroplane), it took ten minutes to induce them. They seemed to fear being whirled away.

I am due to start back on Saturday ; I hope the weather will improve.

Yesterday (Sunday) evening we had dinner with Colonel Joyce (adviser to the Arab Army), and his wife promised to help me to get an Arab " abeiyah " for you and one for Philip. It's a loose silky gown of a thing and can be made into evening dress or dressing gown or anything. The deuce, I fear, is the French Customs, but perhaps I could send round by parcels post. The good ones cost anything from 70 to 300 rupees. Mrs. Joyce is to take me to the bazaar, to have a look.

It's a pity that all the best of my trip has come when it's too late, almost, to write. . . .

### TO HUGH TRENCHARD

*Messageries Maritimes, 22 April, 1922.*

By the time this reaches you I shall be home. I have had a great time. I stayed with No. 14 Ramleh, and No. 216 Heliopolis, I was flown by Elliot, Delamain, Hilton, Tyrrell, Carter, and Parker. I had four days and nights in the desert.

They are a splendid crowd. May I come and see you some mid week day in the first or second week of May ?

Borton is a great man, not only with his own men, but with the Arabs. Gaskell Blackburne said to me, " I'm a naval man ; but I don't want to be under any naval command if I can be under Borton."

To E. Y. DANIEL

*Ferry Hinksey, 4.5.22.*

It can't be done. They work away at my temperature but without much success. They are of course tyrannical and refuse me beer which I pine for. When I can get up to London we will have some beer. They also fill me with things the taste of which to any reverent natural theologian is sufficient proof that God never intended these things for human consumption. I hope it won't be very long, but I am sure it can't be next week.

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Dictated per L. R.

## WRITINGS OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH

1883

A History. [Fragment in the Manner of Robert Browning.]  
(*Cambridge Review*, November 7, 1883.)

1884

On some Prominent Points in Browning's Teaching. (*Browning Society's Papers*, No. 25.)

My Love Story. (*Cambridge Review*, May 14, 1884.)

1890

Poetry and Fact : An Inaugural Address delivered at University College, Liverpool, March 13, 1890. *Henry Young*, Liverpool.

1892

Ode to Music. Performed at the Installation of the Chancellor of the Victoria University, Manchester, May 25, 1892. Manchester.

1893

A Souvenir of the Performance of Browning's Tragedy *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, Manchester, March 27, 1893. Prologue by Walter Raleigh. Manchester.

1894

Choral Song. Sung on the Occasion of the Installation of the President of University College, Liverpool, February 21, 1894. Liverpool.

The English Novel : Being a short sketch of its history from the earliest times to the appearance of *Waverley*. (*University Extension Manuals*.) *John Murray*.

Sir George Mackenzie (Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. 3.) *Macmillan*.

Thomas Sprat (Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. 3.) *Macmillan*.

## 1895

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Edward Arnold.*

The Riddle : A pleasant pastoral Comedy adapted from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. *Clarendon Press.*

Tudor Translations. (*Fortnightly Review*, vol. 64, 1895.)

## 1896

Poet and Historian : A Dialogue. (*The Yellow Book*, January, 1896.)

Charlotte Brontë (Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. 5.)  
*Macmillan.*

Robert Louis Stevenson (Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. 5.)  
*Macmillan.*

Sir John Harrington. (*New Review*, September, 1896.)

The Human Bacillus. (*New Review*, November, 1896.)

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